

A Collection of School Best Practices

Identified in the Local Government Budget Review's School Reports

An important part of the Local Government Budget Review reports were the Best Practices section. During the course of every review, each review team identified procedures, programs and practices what were noteworthy and deserving of recognition. Best practices are presented to encourage their replication in schools and communities throughout the state.

This report contains best practice sections from 50 of the Local Government Budget Review's school district reviews. It is designed as a reference tool that the reader may identify exceptional programs individual school districts through out the State of New Jersey offer. Readers are encouraged to read the full report available at www.state.nj.us/treasury/lgbr.

ATLANTIC BOE

BUSINESS AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

The Atlantic City Schools and Atlantic City businesses formed a partnership by formally adopting an “Adopt - A - School” charter on April 29, 1991. The district proudly displays the charter listing those businesses that formed partnerships with the various schools and the dignitaries that signed the original charter. Included in the signing were the former Governor and Commissioner of Education, Mayor, former Superintendent, County Superintendent, Executive Director and President of the Atlantic City Education Foundation, Casino Association President and then President of the Board of Education. Each of the casinos, McDonalds of Atlantic City, IBM Corporation, FAA Technical Center and Atlantic City Electric were the primary businesses that adopted the various schools. Other businesses and Stockton College have joined in the partnership efforts. Each school has at least one business partner. The business partners provide a number of services to their adopted schools. These include: sponsoring field trips and assembly programs; tutors and shadowing programs; awards and recognition for student achievement, honors, and attendance; needed materials and equipment; and more. Often they respond to requests from teachers and principals. Stockton College provides expertise, student opportunities, and staff training in various areas, particularly at the high school. The Miss America Pageant sends volunteer contestants to two school sites to interact in learning activities with the students. Fifteen contestants participated during this year’s pageant week.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

In addition to businesses providing resources to the city’s schools, various individuals and agencies also provide a variety of services to the schools and students. Some of those and the services provided during 1994-95 include:

- Atlantic County Alcohol & Substance Abuse
- Speakers for our Health Classes
- Department of Health
- Pregnancy & Teen Age Mothers
- Atlantic City Medical Center
- Crisis Resolution
- Career Awareness
- Hospital Group
- Resorts International
- Partnership in Education
- After School Tutorial Program
- Management Trainee
- Family Crisis
- Family Counseling
- Truancy

- Atlantic County Women Center
- Department of Correction C.O.P.E.
- Southern Resource Center, Egg Harbor
- Institute of Human Development
- Counselor of Substance Abuse
- Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth C.T.Y.
- SAT for sixth grade students
- DYFS
- Child Abuse/Neglect
- Peer Mediation
- Drug and Alcohol Free Monitoring Program
- CART - Cape Assessment Resource Team
- Prosecutor's Office - Juvenile

THE COMMUNITY/SCHOOL FACILITY CONCEPT

The Atlantic City School System maintains two Community/School facilities: one at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School Complex and the other at the Uptown School Complex. These facilities are dedicated to serving the educational, social, recreational and medical needs in the neighborhoods in which they are located. They are the result of the joint efforts of the Atlantic City Board of Education, the City of Atlantic City and Atlantic Human Resources Inc. (which is funded by the county, the city and United Way). Each of these facilities has been in existence for almost 20 years and is headed by a community coordinator. They are financed solely by moneys from federal, state and local nonproperty tax sources. The facilities offer a wide variety of recreation programs for children and adults from 4:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. on weekdays. Programs include competitive and recreational swimming, weight lifting and fitness training, aerobics, dancing, Senior Citizen programs and competitive sports for all ages. Participation in the various activities offered at these community facilities is extensive. For example, the monthly attendance report for April, 1995 reported 5,572 participants. The facilities are also renting to small and large groups for private events; e.g., club meetings and wedding receptions. During FY'95 the renting of the facilities realized \$15,210 in revenue. Each of the facilities has a Family Center which serves as a clinic for low income community members to receive medical care. Offerings in these centers include: - intake, counseling, referral and follow-up for all programs sponsored by the Atlantic Human Resources and other social service agencies; e.g., family planning, mental health and substance abuse counseling; and - ambulatory health care; e.g., infant-adolescent-adult physical exams and sick care, immunizations, dental services, and preventive health screening. The volume of family center services (Sept. 1994 through Aug. 1995) is displayed in the chart below.

Dr. MLK School Uptown Complex Total

Clients Served 2,218 1,348 3,566 The Family Centers also sponsor Project Head Start and the Foster Grandparent Program whereby low-income older adults work with special needs children in day care centers, public schools, youth shelters, etc. Other offerings include community relation programs, weatherization and rental assistance, outreach services and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

The Atlantic City School Board pays the city \$120,000 per year for the Latchkey (after school program) segment with the understanding that the city will provide needed materials, equipment and instructors.

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS PROGRAM

Each elementary school participates and supports the Foster Grandparents Program. Senior citizens, often low income older adults, serve faithfully as volunteers in the various buildings. They apply and are approved to serve in a variety of ways such as classroom aides, teacher helpers, office workers, assistants in the lunchroom or wherever needed. Several seniors may be found in a particular school. They are identifiable by the red blazer jackets they wear when on duty. They develop mutual friendships with the children and receive much personal reward, worth, usefulness and satisfaction from their service. Everyone benefits from this worthwhile low cost program.

URBAN SCHOOLS SERVICE CORPS

The Urban Schools Service Corps (USSC) is a pass-through, federally funded K-6 program. The Atlantic City School System matches 15% of the funding "in kind". Presently, the program is being offered at 12 selected urban sites located throughout the State, two of which are in Atlantic City; one at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School Complex and the other at the Indiana Avenue School. This program is designed to meet the needs of poorer students, families and neighborhoods. Assistance is offered in urban areas characterized by such factors as high crime rates, poor levels of health, youth violence, low literacy rates, significant drop-out rates, unemployment, teenage pregnancy and dysfunctional families. The goal of the program is to provide activities and services to promote academic success, linkages to needed social services and parental involvement in education. The programs in these schools operate daily (Monday through Friday) from 9:00 AM to 5:15 PM. Both programs include extensive in-classroom tutoring and monitoring throughout the school day assisting up to 300 students per week in each facility. Each of the schools also operates a Latchkey child service for approximately 50 students at each site.

One major difference between the program at MLK and that at Indiana Avenue is the fact that the Indiana Avenue School has a significant Hispanic student population. Efforts are being made to address this situation by hiring bilingual members for the program. Staffing for each of the Atlantic City sites presently consists of one site manager, one secretary and five corps members. Both sites are being expanded to 10 full-time and five part-time corps members at no expense to the district. Each of the schools has engaged in partnerships with several community agencies. MLK receives assistance from Trump Castle and McDonalds. Indiana Avenue works with Bally's and the FAA. Also, the city government assists both schools with various endeavors.

In addition to tutoring children and providing counseling, conflict resolution and student development services, USSC also offers student activities in such areas as cultural arts, culinary arts, arts and crafts and music. The program promotes parental involvement and

participation in various mini-workshops, community initiatives, parent literacy groups, computer training, job skill development, basic education and GED's.

ATLANTIC CITY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION SAFETY INITIATIVE

The Atlantic City Education Association (ACEA), as part of the New Jersey Education Association's (NJEA) Pride in Our Schools campaign, secured a grant from NJEA to provide teachers serving lunch duty supervision on the playgrounds with walkie-talkies and training to ensure the safety of the children. The ACEA obtained the walkie-talkies at cost from a local vendor and with the vendor provided training to school employees on proper use and procedures with the equipment. The district's Director of Security assisted with technical aspects and support. This Securing Our Schools (SOS) program provides a needed measure of security at no cost to the district.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Atlantic City School System maintains an Alternative Education Program for students who choose not to or are not allowed to seek a high school diploma via the conventional route. This program has been run successfully since 1985. The program is located in the Atlantic City High School, functioning as a school within a school, by utilizing the resources and facilities of the traditional school, e.g., computer labs, art rooms, offices, gymnasium, etc.. There are 45 students in the program and enrollment has been consistent for the past three years. Staffing consists of one supervisor, one counselor, eight teachers (each teaching one of the two two-hour shifts; 3:00 to 5:00 PM and 5:00 to 7:00 PM) and one secretary. The most common reasons for students being in the Alternative Ed. Program include the following:

- discipline problems in the regular school program,
- chronic tardiness or absenteeism in the traditional day school format,
- pregnancy,
- referrals by outside agencies having interest in the students' welfare, or assignments by legal authorities (e.g., NJ Department of Juvenile Services and Family Court), and
- School Board referrals due to individual circumstances in relation to personal development, family life, peer association, etc.

The budget for the Alternative Education Program for the year ending June, 1994 totaled \$196,500 representing expenditures for personnel, fringes and materials/teaching supplies. This provides an alternate education at an approximate cost of \$4,367 per student. In addition to the Alternate Education Program, students from Atlantic City have several other options which include the following:

- GED Program
- GED Incentive Program
- Atlantic County Alternative School
- New Jersey National Guard Challenge Youth Program
- Atlantic City Night School
- Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)

- Atlantic County Vocational Adult High School
- Project Ahead
- Job Corps
- Back on Track, and
- Atlantic City Youth Build..

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Atlantic City School System sponsors an Adult Education Program located in the Atlantic City High School. The Adult High School provides a free, for residents, secondary education which includes instruction in the core subjects and a number of specific skill development courses. Each student is given an individually prescribed course of study to fulfill state and local requirements for graduation. Rather than seek a high school diploma, students may opt to use this program to prepare for and seek General Equivalency Diplomas (GED's), to enroll in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program, or to take part in "spare time" courses being offered. Enrollment in the Adult Education Program for the past three school years is displayed in the chart below.

See Report

In the 1993/94 school year and all the previous years the Adult Education Program was offered in the city at the old Atlantic City High School. In 1994 the program was moved to the new high school. This posed a problem in that there was no public transportation from downtown Atlantic City out to the high school; hence the significant drop in enrollment for 1994/95. It is suggested that the district arrange Jitney or other public transportation routes to ease this situation. The present year has seen a significant increase in enrollment. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that in order to receive financial aid or employment opportunities, people are now required to be enrolled in educational programs. There are tuition requirements for the ESL Program, \$30 per enrollee, for out-of-district enrollees and for "cultural or spare time course" enrollees, \$10 for AC residents and \$25 for out-of-district students. Staffing for the Adult Education Program consists of one supervisor, one counselor, one secretary and 12 teachers. The cost of the program for the 1995/96 school year is \$122,000. Revenue for the 1994/95 school year totaled \$9,059.99. Efforts are presently being made to establish NJ Transit bus routes from downtown Atlantic City to the high school. This would address the problem of potential Adult Education students not enrolling due to lack of transportation.

ENERGY SAVINGS MEASURES

As a result of energy savings initiatives planned in the construction of the new Atlantic City High School, the district received a rebate of \$97,550.00 in May, 1995 from the Atlantic Electric Company. In addition, the district had energy audits conducted at five of its remaining ten schools. Further, the district is under contract with Honeywell Energy Management Systems that projects a savings in building operation costs of \$377,059 over a five year period starting in 1993.

TRANSPORTATION MEASURES

The transportation department has taken two steps in their operations that are efficient and noteworthy. The first is the installation of video surveillance on approximately 15 of its buses transporting students to the high school. This has allowed the district to visually document and demonstrate misbehavior to parents of those students who acted out while on the school bus. This has resulted in improved safety, security and behavior on the buses. The second efficient measure is that of using software to design the bus routing. This has resulted in efficient routing of the school buses throughout the district and a cost savings to the schools.

BARNEGAT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Extended Year Program

The Barnegat District conducts a summer school that includes a special education program. This saves money since extended year programs are not reimbursed by the state. Further, tuition costs for extended year students would present greater expense if purchased outside the district. In addition, transportation costs to programs held outside of the district would be more costly than transportation to district locations.

Special Education Medicaid Initiative

The Barnegat schools participate in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI). While total savings from SEMI involvement are not large, they do represent additional funds. Participation in the program by the Barnegat District demonstrates a cost-consciousness that is commendable.

Middle School Synergistics Program

The synergistics program at the Brachman Middle School impressed the team. This part of the curriculum provides middle school students with a two-year experience in a variety of technological areas. Using video equipment, computers, and print texts, the program provides students with experience such as: audio and video broadcasting, flight technology, meteorology, electronics, graphic communications, and applied physics. The lab is also available for faculty use two periods per day to utilize the computers for Internet access and word processing. This full-time space and equipment utilization creatively promotes efficiency, as well as makes specialized equipment more available for a variety of curricular uses. The program seems to generate good student involvement while providing career information in an interesting and relevant way to students.

Edwards School Family/Student Lunch Program

The Edwards School has a family-student lunch program through which family members may have lunch at the school with students. This no cost approach fosters positive school-family relations while enabling family members an opportunity to sample the district's school lunch program. These visits by a variety of adults also provide feedback to school authorities concerning many facets of the food program. This effort seems to be an effective and cost-free way to obtain valuable information for both parents and school.

Half-Day Staff Coverage

The district's use of full-time staff members on a half-day basis to cover the basic skills, reading recovery, art, computer lab, or kindergarten program is an effective cost-saving practice .

Student Assistance Program

The Barnegat Township Schools' Student Assistance Program is available to all students who are experiencing personal, family, and/or substance related problems. The purpose of the program is to identify students with possible problems and to assist them quickly. Prevention is a key component of the overall program. CORE teams in each building, comprised of staff members with varied job responsibilities within the school, meet monthly to suggest ways to help students with school problems related to alcohol or other drug use. The district has adopted and implemented an age and grade appropriate comprehensive drug and violence prevention program. These activities are designed to: 1) provide instruction in peer pressure resistance skills; 2) prevent violence and develop conflict resolution techniques and promote school safety; and, 3) encourage the involvement of parents and program coordination with community groups and agencies. The program identifies resources and services within the school and provides the students with staff members and parents who can be a supporting part of their lives. The Barnegat School District has won recognition from the U.S. Department of Education for its anti-drug programs. Additional program information can be found in the findings and recommendations section of this report.

BAYONNE CITY

Academy for Professional Development

The Bayonne School District has taken a proactive approach in the area of professional growth and development. In-service training for staff is provided after school, during released time, or during summer sessions. During the fall of 1998, over 20 courses were offered (a course must have at least 10 participants to run). The courses' stress a variety of areas, but the most popular courses are in the area of technology. The district utilizes district personnel, consultants, and nationally recognized speakers in its effort to provide well-balanced programs. For certain in-service or workshop training sessions, the district grants district credits that can be used toward increased salary compensation. The majority of the money to fund staff development activities comes from grants.

Adopt-A-School Program

The Bayonne School District makes a concerted effort to encourage all schools in the district to get involved in the Adopt-A-School Program. It is a successful and commendable endeavor. Although some schools have experienced more success than others have, the idea is a good one. Each school has experienced some success in the program, but the following stand out:

- The high school has promoted a working relationship with International Matex Tanks Terminals (IMTT) which has resulted in about \$15,000 worth of support on a yearly basis. IMTT grants have supported clubs, concerts, scholarships, and programs. The

company, with assistance from the mayor, selects from proposals submitted by the faculty.

- Cas Chem, another Bayonne Company, has adopted an elementary school and sponsored the installation of an intercom system costing \$25,000.

Awards/Recognition

The Bayonne School District actively solicits recognition for its fine programs and schools. Over the last few years Bayonne High School has been cited as a finalist for the National Blue Ribbon Award, a top-10 Star School in New Jersey, a recipient of a Best Practice Award for its outdoor physical education course, and recognition by New Jersey Monthly as one of the top 45 high schools in the state. The Midtown Community School has also been recognized by Redbook magazine as one of America's Best Schools and by the New Jersey Department of Education as a Star School. In addition, the New Jersey Department of Education recognized the Bayonne School District as being among the top 25 schools in technology, for four years in a row. The Bayonne Board of Education won the 1998 Governor's Award in Art Education that was cosponsored by the New Jersey State Department of Education and the Alliance for Arts Education/NJ.

Employee Health Services

Under the current director of the district's medical department, the district staffs its own employee health services office to assess workers' job-related injuries. Data drawn up by the district's Medical Director and provided to the review team by the director of the medical department, evidenced net savings of \$25,500 in the school year 1996-1997. In addition to the evidenced cost savings achieved, this service affords the district the opportunity to keep itself informed first-hand of work safety issues.

Library Resources: Reference and Research

The director of technology, business education, media and libraries has recently purchased online access to extensive reference and research materials for Bayonne High School. This has allowed the high school's library/media center to greatly expand students' access to reference and research materials, providing students with double the number of major newspapers and approximately 60 times the number of magazines and journals previously available to them on campus. The 1998-1999 cost of implementing these changes was \$1,955 over school year 1997- 1998 periodical and online research expenditures, and is scheduled to drop to only \$605 more than 1997-1998 cost in school year 1999-2000.

Senior Teacher Aides

The Bayonne School District has an excellent rapport with its senior citizens participating in the Senior Teacher Aides Program. It is a volunteer program that provides an opportunity for senior citizens to work several times per week with the students in the district on a one-to-one basis. The program has about 50 seniors involved in the program, and the district saves an undetermined amount of money by not having to hire as many teacher aides.

Swimming Program

All of the third grade students in the district participate in the district's swimming program held at Lincoln Community School #5. The program is unique and very forward thinking in that the activity is part of the physical education curriculum. By design, the students are exposed to water safety techniques and swimming lessons.

Work Rules

The district has negotiated work rules in its labor agreement with engineers, custodians, bus drivers, and maintenance staff that allow management discretion, and flexible utilization of staff in making daily assignments of duties and responsibilities, and longer term changes in shift and work site assignments. This allows maximum flexibility in the daily allocation of staff to respond to engineer and custodial shortages in schools and district emergencies. Buildings and grounds management staff, have also demonstrated a commitment to provide a safe and clean learning environment and to prioritize emergency building conditions in a responsive manner.

Energy Management

The district has wisely invested capital dollars in the replacement of roofs and windows throughout the district. Even though most Bayonne schools were constructed over 60 years ago, they are "tight and dry", unlike schools in many other urban districts. The district has also invested in an energy management/control system and hosts a central station that monitors and controls the boilers and temperatures in each school. Both initiatives are investments in the safety and comfort of students and staff that improve the learning environment, properly manage the district's resources, and protect the district's capital assets while lowering operating costs. The district's 1998 fiscal year cost for gas and electric to light, heat, and cool its buildings was \$.97 per square foot, which represents annual cost savings of approximately \$167,500 over the regional average of \$1.10 per square foot.

Special Education

The Bayonne School District's special education population is about 14% in the elementary schools and 19% in the high school. The district conducts several exceptional special education programs, which bear mentioning, and have, in fact, attracted tuition-students from surrounding districts.

Project Independence

Project Independence is a Special Services program for some of the district's more severely developmentally disabled students. Its purpose is to provide these students with vocational and life skills training so that they may function independently in society and become gainfully employed. Approximately 40 mentally retarded or multiply handicapped students participate in the program, which is housed within one of the district's elementary school buildings. The program originally was established for students ages 14 to 21, but has recently expanded to include those eight and above. The program encompasses all facets of independent living, including home living skills, employment orientation, building maintenance skills, supermarket careers, child care, office skills, and community exploration. The students work within a controlled environment, which facilitates their success at the given task. The team visited the school

and observed each of the programs. Students in various classes were observed sorting papers, adding numbers on adding machines, sweeping hallways, cooking, baking, washing dishes, learning about survival signs, e.g., high voltage, wet paint, keep off the grass, etc., pricing grocery items, and completing craft projects. During the weekly community exploration component, the students visit various businesses in the area, e.g., restaurants, supermarkets, and movie theaters. This provides an opportunity for them to observe and apply the skills they have learned in a real working environment. It was apparent that the Project Independence students are proud of their accomplishments and demonstrated abilities.

Autistic Classes

The Bayonne School District educates the vast majority of its special needs students, even those with more severe handicaps, within district. This is frequently not the case in other districts, and the team commends Bayonne for its efforts in this regard. The team makes particular note of the classes provided in-district for students with autism, begun about six years ago. Based upon data provided by the special services office, the team estimates that educating 23 students with autism in-district saves the district a minimum of \$346,000 per year. The district has recently returned some multiply handicapped students to in-district classes for additional savings as well.

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOE

Business Education Department

The Ridge High School business education department has two programs which save the district an estimated \$39,000 annually. Students, under the guidance of the teacher, run a word processing center, which reproduces school publications, including the program of studies, guidance modules, student activity brochures and other documents. This saves an estimated \$15,000 annually in printing costs. Students in the business education practicum are assigned to work in one of the school offices under the supervision of the school staff. They perform filing, word processing, and photocopying functions. While putting into practice the skills they have learned in class, these student services save the district the salary of one secretary, or \$24,000 annually.

Library Cooperative

The high school media center belongs to the Highlands Regional Library Cooperative (HRLC), composed of over 900 library members in seven northwest counties of New Jersey. Consequently, the high school can take advantage of group purchase discounts on many costly reference items, both print and electronic, and to use Comet as the inter-library loan courier for no charge. The itemized savings are \$12,746 per year.

Community Service

With parental permission, students may be assigned to the Bernards Township Community Service Program to perform physical work on weekends for the community as a consequence for violating the school discipline code. This program negates

supervision expenses equal to one half of a teacher's salary (\$20,000) to coordinate and supervise an indoor suspension program, which was eliminated.

Cooperative Purchasing

The review team was favorably impressed with the cooperative purchasing practices of the school district for supplies. Through a well-planned and efficiently executed system, purchase orders per bids were approved for Educational Data Services, Inc. in cooperation with 81 school districts in central New Jersey. The district purchased \$328,000 in general supplies through this cooperative purchasing system. Based upon review team experience in other districts, the estimated net savings are about \$65,000 per year.

Electric Deregulation

The district has capitalized on deregulation of natural gas and electricity by cooperatively purchasing these commodities from third party suppliers. The savings for gas have been about \$41,000 per year. The district has also joined Alliance for Competitive Energy Services (ACES), a statewide electricity purchase cooperative, and has received competitive rates for district buildings. First year savings were estimated to be \$51,000.

Privatization of Custodial and Maintenance Services

Within the last few years, the district privatized custodial and maintenance services. After negotiating a settlement with the Bernards Township Educational Association to terminate employment of custodial and maintenance employees, reportedly net savings of \$113,000 or more were realized in the first year. Over the four-year period, the cumulative amount saved through the privatization of custodial and maintenance service exceeds \$300,000. Analyses of the 1999-00 costs are contained in a later section of this report.

Employee Health Benefits

Through negotiations with the Bernards Township Education Association, the district implemented a PPO managed care program. Approximately 50% of eligible employees have transferred coverage to this less expensive plan. The district has a minimum premium program requiring that only actual claims be paid each month, with a maximum liability established for the year. The maximum liability has not been reached in the two years since the PPO was offered. Based on the two prior years' billings, it is estimated that net savings through the PPO are about \$124,000 per year.

Education Foundation

The Bernards Township Education Foundation, a not-for-profit organization of concerned parents, educators and community members, has a mission to secure resources for projects to enrich the academic, athletic, cultural and social development of students of the district. The Foundation welcomes support from individuals, corporations, local businesses and other foundations. It supplements public financing so that educational standards will remain high and educational goals can be met. In recent years, New Jersey public education has experienced significant financial pressure due to legislated spending caps and variations in annual state financial school aid. This has often presented local

school officials with difficult decisions regarding reductions in services and programs and/or significant increases in local property taxes. Foundation funds totaling \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year support new or enhanced school functions, including grants for faculty and students. Special projects have been funded in the arts, athletics, technology, science and other areas relating to the academic and extracurricular needs of students.

The review team observes that both at the board of education and administration levels, school officials in Bernards Township take pride in offering quality programs for students at reasonable cost. Considerable thought and discussion center around maintaining an exceptionally good school system, while keeping property tax rates at a reasonable level.

BLOOMFIELD BOE

College Credit In The High School Program

Upon examination by college personnel, certain courses offered at the high school have been found to be equivalent to those offered at the college. Through the cooperative efforts of the high school and Bloomfield College, Bloomfield High School students taking any of several courses can receive college credit for those courses. Following successful completion of these courses, students are awarded Bloomfield College transcripts indicating such and, at the student's request, the transcripts are sent to the college(s) of his/her choice. The instructor teaching the course has been named an adjunct faculty member of the college and the course is supervised by both the high school and the college. High school students enrolled in this "College Credit in the High School Program" are also considered Bloomfield College students. They are issued college identification cards and have full use of the college library. They are also invited to various college academic and social functions. Some high school students taking part in this program have attended the Learning Support Workshop for lessons on speed reading and/or attended sessions in time management and study skills. For this program, now in its sixteenth year, each institution to which a student applies sets its own policy for granting transfer credit from Bloomfield College. The application fee of the College is waived, and the course tuition is reduced to \$100. per course. An average of 15 students per year take part in this program.

Parenting Workshops

This program is a series of five workshops following the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) method. It is open to all parents of students (K-12) in the District. These workshops focus on such topics as:

- ? Communication and listening skills;
- ? Developing practical discipline methods;
- ? Techniques dealing with conflict resolution and growing independence;
- ? Career aspirations of parents for their children; and
- ? Methods to develop mutual respect, cooperation and self-esteem for all family members.

The guidance counselors are formally trained as facilitators. The program is offered twice per year; once each semester. Participation usually averages about 40 parents of elementary school children and 30 parents of secondary students.

Vocational Education & Special Training (V.E.S.T.)

The Vocational Education and Special Training (V.E.S.T.) Program is characterized by two themes: employability and independence. The ultimate goal is “to develop necessary work skills for successful employment and make these individuals contributing members of society.” The program, housed in the middle school, is for special needs students, ages 13 to 21. Each student has an I.E.P. (Individual Educational Plan) developed according to his/her needs. V.E.S.T. teachers are certified Special Education instructors with additional certificates in agricultural occupations, Administration/Supervision, and Masters degrees in Career Industrial Education for the Handicapped. Staffing consists of four classroom instructors, instructional aides and school aides. The middle school guidance counselors also provide assistance as needed. V.E.S.T. acts as a liaison between the school and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation(DVR). An exit plan is developed between parents and staff whereby upon graduation provisions are made for placement of all students into the DVR for further special training and ultimately into the job market. Academic areas include: Reading, Language Arts, Vocational Reading, Math, Social Studies & Life Skills. Supplemental offerings include: Vocal & Instrumental Music, Regular & Adaptive/Corrective Physical Education, and Speech and Art Therapy. Vocational instruction includes Horticulture, Landscaping, Flower Arranging, Shrink Packaging, Computer Engraving, Injection Molding, Button Making, Filing, Collating and Employment Orientation. Additional services include vocational assessment and cooperative education.

Tech Prep Model (2 + 2)

A curriculum revision initiative, which is a part of the national “School-to-Work” Movement, has been implemented to address the needs of students targeted for educational improvement. The Essex County Health Careers Consortium (ECHCC) established by Bloomfield Public Schools has been awarded a five-year, \$440,000 grant by the New Jersey Department of Education’s School to- Work Initiative Department. The major goal is to “systematically change the way schools prepare students for work.” A “School-to-Work” Committee, comprised of 22 high school teachers has been working with employers of Bloomfield high school students. The ECHCC, with Bloomfield as its lead agency, has applied for a competitive grant for \$35,000 and an additional \$150,000 grant to establish a fiber-optic, interactive television (ITV) classroom at the high school. The ITV classroom would link the Consortium members (Bloomfield, East Orange, Glen Ridge and Montclair high schools), as well as the Essex County Technical Careers Center, with the University of Medicine and Dentistry School of Related Health Professions, Bloomfield College and Essex County College. In addition, hospitals, health care agencies, and selected health care industry representatives would participate in long-distance learning through various information technologies. Once established, use of the ITV is to be expanded to other career areas for School-to-Work students (e.g., law enforcement, office systems technologies, etc.). It should be noted that Bloomfield’s Health Career-to-Work design has been selected for presentation at the National School

Boards Association Convention in Orlando, Florida and the National Association of School Administrators Convention in San Diego, California.

Volunteerism

There is a separate Home and School Organization for each school in the District and a central one that represents the entire District and consists of members of the individual school groups. These organizations have been avid supporters of the needs of the schools and have provided considerable financial support, perhaps most evident in the purchase of equipment for the Technology Activity Centers in each school. Financial support provided by these groups frequently lessens the burden on the taxpayers to provide additional resources to the District. The benefits provided by the Home and School organizations are clearly evident in each school and we applaud their efforts. Though only staffed with a half-time librarian, the elementary libraries still remain open or accessible with teacher supervision all day. This is because each of the schools has between 15 and 20 volunteers who receive library skills orientation and work in the libraries - returning books to shelves, offering assistance to students, etc. These efforts allow the schools to offer services without the burden of staffing costs.

Individual School Highlights

The team was impressed by the special programs developed to meet the unique needs of the students in each school. It is clear that considerable effort has been made by the principals and staff at each school to target programs to assist the particular student body enrolled in that school. These efforts are discussed further in a later section of this report.

BORDENTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Community Education and Recreation (CE/R)

The City of Bordentown, Bordentown Township, and the Bordentown Regional District combine their efforts to conduct a comprehensive community education and recreation program. All municipal and school district facilities are coordinated and scheduled by the CE/R director. The CE/R programs offer free summer programs and fee-based before and after school childcare and an array of adult evening courses. The cost to the regional district is about \$18,000 annually. A more complete description of the uniquely cooperative municipal and public school CE/R program is located under Shared Services.

Both school and municipal officials are commended for this innovative program which provides valuable educational, childcare and recreational programs for the public in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

K-12 Regional

Bordentown Regional School District is one of a limited number of K-12 regional school districts in New Jersey. A more common pattern involves individual elementary school districts and an additional regional high school or grade 7-12 district. The K-12 organizational pattern saves tens of thousands of dollars by avoiding multiple central offices and administrative expenses.

Volunteer Program

The regional district maintains a comprehensive volunteer program, which provides services to classrooms, nurses' offices, etc. The coordinator is a parent and the various services are reported at the end of each year. The estimated value of these volunteer services during 1997-98 was about \$28,000. As part of the PTA and PTO, the two K-6 elementary schools maintain a homeroom parent program. Parent leaders are assigned for each classroom and serve in various capacities, including service as chaperones on field trips. Each time that a parent serves as a chaperone, the district saves the cost of a substitute or classroom teacher.

Senior Driving Privileges

Senior students are permitted to drive their autos to school. If seniors were required to ride school buses to and from school, there would be the need to employ two additional bus drivers. The senior driving privilege saves the district about \$32,000 annually.

Hourly Employees

The negotiated agreement permits the district to employ hourly employees for up to 26 hours per week before benefits are awarded. This contract provision does not reduce any current positions, but currently allows the district to save about \$24,000 annually in fringe benefits.

Hiring Practices

District hiring practices, while endeavoring to select the best candidates for open positions, recognizes limited resources by employing many teachers at step one on the salary guide. The philosophy is not to exceed step five in initial employment, other than under exceptional circumstances.

Professional Development

The district is commended for providing an extensive professional development program. By holding an in-service with the Florence School District on a cooperative basis, the district provides an excellent program of seminars at estimated savings of \$10,000 annually. The district also offers after school courses for credit in a variety of subject areas. There are after-school sessions for a total of 15 hours each in the fall and spring with an attendance of about 50 staff members each season. After school courses, in contrast with the traditional school day format, saves the district about \$70,000 per year.

Refinancing

In 1988 the district refinanced a lease purchase principal of about \$1.3 million for a total savings of \$103,463, or an average annual interest savings of \$11,496 over nine payments. This is one more example of efforts by district officials to get the most benefit from tax dollars.

District Board of Education and administrative officials are commended for numerous examples of efforts toward cost-effective operations while offering good educational programs and facilities for children and youth.

Cooperation & Assistance of Private Sector Businesses

The Bound Brook school system has been very successful in seeking and attaining assistance from area businesses, a number of which are not located in Bound Brook. Examples include the following:

- **AT&T** volunteers wired all of the Bound Brook school buildings for the Internet (referred to as the “Net Day Project”). AT&T has been very generous with its expertise, staff resources and money donations to the district. The company donated \$10,000 toward “seed money” for the Educational Foundation (mentioned below) which is providing staff resources to assist in the closing of the LaMonte Elementary School and movement of furniture and equipment to the Lafayette and Smalley Schools.
- **Union Carbide** has donated money to the school district via grants particularly geared toward math and science initiatives. The company also provides funding for the “Student to Washington D.C. Program.”
- **The Education Foundation** is an autonomous corporation with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, separate and distinct from the board of education. The mission of the foundation is to enhance the quality of education and provide new educational opportunities for the students of the Bound Brook School District by generating and distributing financial, and other, resources. In carrying out its mission, funds are provided for activities which supplement, compliment and augment the basic education program and include equipment and facilities not provided by other means. Teachers and other school staff are offered “venture capital” for creative ideas and programs, including resources to enhance their professional growth. The foundation promotes community awareness of educational challenges and solutions; develops enrichment programs to address the needs of the Bound Brook School District and the community it serves, fosters development of alumni relations, and provides a vehicle for individuals, businesses and organizations to share resources and gifts with the Bound Brook School District. To date, the foundation has been very successful in its fund raising efforts. Thanks to these efforts and the resulting donations, the foundation has been able to provide fall and spring mini grants to teachers sponsoring various initiatives. Plans are now in the making to finance the renovation and restoration of the high school auditorium.
- **Ethicon**, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, donates funds, sponsors and provides both expertise and staff resources (engineers) to assist students involved in the Robotics Program; the design and construction of radio controlled robots. Assistance extends from initial planning and designing right through to robot construction and participation in the national tournament which is held annually.
- **Public donations** from residents and alumni have resulted in the purchase of approximately \$30,000 worth of new equipment for the newly renovated weight room in the high school.
-

Reading Recovery Program

The Bound Brook school system participates in the Reading Recovery Program, a nationally acclaimed supplemental reading program aimed at teaching low achieving

children to become independent, efficient readers and writers. The goal of the program is to provide an intensive short-term intervention for students in the lowest 20% of the grade one population. The program includes five key elements:

- An instructional program for children;
- A unique two-level in-service teacher education model;
- A set of professional materials and trade books for children;
- A program of continuing education for trained Reading Recovery teachers; and
- A program of monitoring, research and evaluation that ensures the long range effectiveness of the program.

The program is cost effective in that students whose needs aren't met now as first graders might need costly basic skills classes in future years.

School-to-Work Opportunities Program

The Bound Brook school system has recently become involved in the NJ School-to-Work Opportunities Program. "New Jersey's school-to-work initiatives involve year-round employer participation, combine school-based and work-based learning, linking them to advanced education to facilitate a smooth transition from school to work. These initiatives provide educated and motivated students with both academic and occupational training, enabling them to develop the necessary technical skills to compete for high-skilled jobs." The program has progressed positively in Bound Brook. Thirty businesses in the area were contacted by the educator in charge of the program and, following one-on-one interaction between students and the program coordinator, several students were placed in available positions. Businesses involved in the program have shown much enthusiasm, requesting additional students, requesting that students remain with them during the summer, etc. Types of businesses participating in the program include child care management, food production/management, health service/management, general office work, computer marketing and distribution, auto supply marketing and distribution, warehousing and shipping.

BRADLEY BEACH BOE

Head Teacher - Approximately ten years ago the Bradley Beach School District eliminated a vice principal position and substituted a head teacher. A head teacher is an individual who is not classified as an administrator, but performs a number of functions common to administrators. In Bradley Beach, for example, the head teacher performs such functions as supervising curriculum and teacher development and overseeing special projects and comprehensive testing. The team recommends that, wherever possible, school districts follow the example set in Bradley Beach and utilize head teacher positions. The team feels that Bradley Beach presents an interesting model for the utilization of experienced staff. This policy appears to maximize use of resources for instructional purposes rather than administrative purposes.

BRIGATINE BOE

Elementary Summer School

Many children in this district are “at-risk” of failure and/or grade retention. A number of factors contribute to this; namely, migratory status, being economically and/or academically disadvantaged, homelessness, and limited English language proficiency. The intent of this summer program is to place greater emphasis on the early years, pre-K through grade 3. Classroom, Title 1, Reading Recovery and Abbot reading teachers are collaborating to identify and recommend children for the program from throughout the district. An enrollment of approximately 500 is expected. The goal of the program is to assist children in benefiting from an integrated program aligned with the core content standards that will complement and not duplicate the school curriculum. Learning activities are designed to ensure that children receive both remediation where needed and advanced skills instruction. Program components include computer assisted instruction, “Step up,” Reading Recovery, mentoring, nutrition, health and transportation services, Junior Great Books Curriculum and “Flying Start.” Support for this program is coming from federal dollars, including Titles I and VI, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Education Grant and Title I-Migrant via the Gloucester County Special Services School District. Additional funds are being used from the 1998-99 DEPA funds and/or early childhood program aid.

It is the general perception that the program is cost effective in that students whose needs aren’t met now as primary grade students might need costly basic skills classes in future years. This program effectively provides these services.

Reading Recovery Program

The Bridgeton school system participates in the Reading Recovery Program, a nationally acclaimed supplemental reading program aimed at teaching low achieving children to become independent, efficient readers and writers. The goal of the program is to provide an intensive short-term intervention for students in the lowest 20% of the grade one population. The program includes five key elements:

- an instructional program for children;
- a unique two-level in-service teacher education model;
- a set of professional materials and trade books for children;
- a program of continuing education for trained Reading Recovery teachers; and
- a program of monitoring, research and evaluation that ensures the long range effectiveness of the program.

This program began in the Bridgeton schools during the 1994-95 school year. Since then Bridgeton has become a teacher training center. This year alone, 11 Bridgeton teachers are being trained along with seven teachers from other districts.

The program appears to be well organized and cost effective.

Student Custodians

The Bridgeton Board of Education and it’s administration, in their efforts to improve the entire student, build good community relations, and provide a clean and safe school

environment, adopted a policy establishing the position of student custodian. It is the district's belief that this program is part of an overall educational experience. It provides for skill development, learning of responsibility and financial assistance for the students. This program is supervised by the district's maintenance supervisor and has been in place for many years. Students who are selected to participate in this program must have demonstrated good work ethics, have good attendance in school, passing grades and be in need of employment. Student custodians have the option of working eight hours per day if they desire. They may also work during the summer months. If for any reason their grades or attendance slips, they are not permitted to continue in the program. Student custodians perform basic cleaning duties and ground maintenance tasks such as mowing the grass, and sweeping the halls. First year student workers are paid at a rate of \$5.20 per hour, second year students are paid \$5.45 per hour and third year students are paid \$5.95 per hour. During the 1996/97 school year, six students participated in this program and were paid a total of \$5,600.

We are supportive of this unique program.

CAMDEN

MEDICAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

The district's Medical Arts High School is a magnet school devoted to the educational development of students interested in a health/services related field. The focus of the school is on a full range of health care including medicine, dentistry, nursing, allied health professions and other ancillary personnel. The program features use of state-of-the-art equipment, field trips to medical facilities, practitioners from professional institutions, internships working with medical professionals at on-site locations and specialized courses in the area of high-tech and medical arts. Community based service and learning cooperative and teamwork skills are required. At the same time, the program provides students with the other courses required in a comprehensive high school education. The highly diverse student body was surrounded by a pervasive atmosphere of enthusiasm, commitment and eagerness to learn through both academics and hands on involvement. Students must go through a rigorous application process while in eighth grade. They are selected on the basis of several criteria including academic standing, behavioral concerns, attendance record, teacher recommendation and parent and student commitment. Some 100 students per class are admitted. The program is in its second year.

The program has health and community linkages with cooperative support and affiliated planning. Agencies include Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Cooper Hospital, West Jersey Hospital, University of Medicine and Dentistry, NJ and Campbell' Soup. Campbell's Soup is a major funding source providing grants to the district purposely for the Medical Arts High School program. The Medical Arts High was housed in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital for the past two years. A special referendum was passed in February for \$3.1 million to renovate an existing industrial building to convert it into a permanent school facility for the program. It is projected that it will be ready for student occupancy in

September, 1996. The Medical Arts High School demonstrates the involvement, commitment and partnership between the educational team, medical profession, students, parents and community to foster a meaningful and focused educational opportunity for Camden's students.

PROJECT TEACH

The district trains teachers to use computers through an ad hoc training system known as PROJECT TEACH. This staff development program provides the teachers with a computer for their use in their classroom upon graduating from the training. The teacher also has responsibility to train other teachers as well. The teachers train on their own time at minimal cost to the district. Applications taught include word processing, spreadsheets and general computer technology. PROJECT TEACH started in 1992 and over 200 teachers have completed the training each receiving more than 120 hours of instruction on various software applications. Over 250 courses have been offered since inception and some 1500 people have participated. The project has been emulated in other districts in New Jersey and continues to be a source of inspiration in the district.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL(S)

The district currently operates Professional Development School programs at Cooper's Poynt and Woodrow Wilson Schools. The program is conducted in collaboration with Rowan College and involves staff throughout the district. The stated goal is to "create a lifelong learning community to facilitate higher levels of learning by educating and empowering all children." Student teachers, experienced teachers and other staff undergo training and then interact with students' parents and the community to enhance the delivery of educational instruction to children. The prevailing feeling upon visiting Cooper's Poynt School was that every effort was being made to assure each student with the maximum opportunity to achieve success. The school was a beehive of activity beginning with the before school program where students were being actively engaged in learning activities. During the regular school day classrooms were productive learning areas with students and staff interacting, parents were involved in programs and administration was visible moving purposefully throughout the building. The school also had meaningful after school activities including homework programs for students and a GED program for parents. There was a genuine feeling of pride generated from everyone in Cooper's Poynt School. We noted that all students and staff wore uniforms and were very supportive of that aspect of their program.

FAMILY SCHOOL PROGRAM

Camden City's Family Schools provide a flexible educational program in which all students, parents and staff become members of a large extended "learning family". Positive interactions, mutual respect and commitment to academic excellence are operating norms. Through Family School Human Service Collaboratives, school based health clinics provide health and social care needs of school students and their parents. By staying in one school for their first nine years (K-8) of education, students and their families experience a degree of stability and continuity in education, health care and human services that are often not attainable. The Riletta Twyne Cream school is run as a "family school" program with the theme "Success is Expected Here" (and it truly is!).

Students and staff wear uniforms and classes appear to be intent on learning the lessons being taught. The school offers a wide range of extra curricular activities. As a family school it interacts with the surrounding community in an effort to respond to the general interests and needs of both the school and the community. The school, in this effort to serve everyone in its area in some way, is open six days a week usually from early morning until late afternoon. In addition to the regular school program, the school offers an extended day program with extra curricular offerings. The before school program has children assembled in three large groups involving them with art, visual and verbal exercises. All attendees are provided with breakfast. The after school program benefits parents and community members as well as students offering GED programs, girl scouts, tutoring and homework centers. Success of the program at Cream School is both reflected by and due to excellent attendance by students and staff. Student attendance for 1994-95 was 93% and faculty attendance was 99%. Class size averaged 24 students with a student/faculty ratio of 17.4. Students are highly motivated leading to their successes and Cream School, along with the Family School at Cooper's Poynt, is one of the district's most successful.

COMER SCHOOLS

The Comer School Development Program is a comprehensive, process driven approach to school transformation developed over 25 years ago by Dr. James Comer of the Yale Child Study Center. The program galvanizes a school community around what is in the best interest of children. It focuses on human relationships and human development, and on integrating everyone into the learning community. The Comer process is a mental health program, a parent involvement program and a school climate improvement program. It has changed the way educators conceive of and carry out their work. There are seven Comer Schools in the district.

PORT OF ENTRY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL

Students from Spanish speaking and Haitian Creole speaking backgrounds, who because of their low level academic experience and achievement in relation to age, upon entering the district are placed in the Lincoln Port of Entry Program. Staff work with small student groupings to develop the level of English proficiency needed to enable integration with their peers. Students observed displayed both an eagerness and pride to demonstrate progress achieved in their quest for English language proficiency.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

There are a number of community businesses and agencies that contribute to and support the Camden City Schools. In addition to the overwhelming support of the Medical Arts High School by those agencies indicated earlier, there are others lending time, talent and financial support in other educational programs, schools and district initiatives. Another such example is the initiative by Power 99 Radio and HMO/BLOCK to improve student attendance, a critical issue in Camden that has caused the district to not receive state certification. Power 99 and HMO/BLOCK provide incentives and rewards for perfect attendance. These include appearances on the radio, gift certificates to restaurants, bicycles, pizza parties for perfect attendance classes and a grand prize of a trip to Disney World.

MULTI-AGENCY LIFE LINE (MALL)

In 1993, the police chief and representatives of the Camden Police Department met with representatives from various social service, law enforcement and non profit agencies to discuss the formation of a coalition among family service agencies and the adoption of a specialized program. Since that time representatives from the following agencies have met regularly to address the conflicting issues facing today's youth: Camden City Police Department, Family Court Intake Services, Camden Board of Education, Camden County Prosecutors Office, Camden County Juvenile Probation Office, Division of Youth and Family Services, Family Counseling Service and The Bridge. The purpose of forming this coalition was to provide a unique method of delivering service needs to the youth and their families through a series of preventative, diverse and enforceable steps through the creation of a "one stop shopping" network to unite all juvenile agencies under "one roof". Given this unique feature, the project was accordingly named The Mall. The objectives of The Mall are as follows:

1. To provide intensive short-term family intervention for 300 youth and family members.
2. To provide counseling groups that focus on education and support services for 100 youth and family members.
3. To provide referrals to and advocacy in obtaining services and education for 500 youth and family members.
4. To provide education through a battery of 300 professional and community members on topics related to inappropriate adolescent behavior and how family involvement can be used as a solution.
5. To provide training and supervision for 30 youth and adult volunteers who will assist with the task of achieving the goals of The Mall.
6. To provide recreation and social activities for 100 youth and family members.
7. To provide routine evaluations of the services provided, through a series of follow-up questionnaires to clients, and other agencies in The Mall, during the course of family intervention and after termination of services.
8. To meet with other service providers in The Mall, and the Camden City Police Department on a monthly basis, and to share pertinent, not withstanding confidential information, relative to the treatment of families in crisis.

Similar programs have been in place in Florida and Ohio and other states that have chosen to revamp their juvenile justice systems (Governor's Advisory Council Report 1994). This concept was introduced in New Jersey in December, 1994 as a result of Executive Order No. 10. This order established the Juvenile Justice Commission under the jurisdiction of the Department of Law and Public Safety - Juvenile Justice Advisory Council.

The Mall partnership is involved in many areas, including: Alcohol, Drug/Codependency Counseling Behavioral Counseling Career Planning Employment Counseling Entrepreneurship Training Family Therapy Gang Violence Intervention Individual and Family Counseling Information Referrals Interviewing Skills Mental Health Services Mentorship Programs Parent and Youth Counseling Groups Peer Counseling Recovery

Groups Runaway Services School and After School Programs Missing, however, from this listing is the district's attendance problem. This matter has been discussed and is an issue the agencies recognize as serious. The Mall has committed to give their attention and assistance to this problem. This is yet another opportunity and example of collaborative and shared effort by the district and community resources for the betterment of the Camden schools and community.

INTERDISTRICT OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Inter-district Outreach Program is a diverse program that has been implemented to foster understanding and respect for people of different races, gender, or cultural heritage through multicultural and curriculum based activities. Host and partner schools such as those from neighboring Cherry Hill and others and Camden plan activities, projects and field trips centered on core curricula subject areas such as reading/language arts, math, science and social studies where appropriate. Activities are designed to help the child become more comfortable with individual differences as well as accepting of others. The ultimate goal of Interdistrict Outreach is to promote positive attitudes and develop an increased awareness of the cultures of others. This type of multicultural education helps students experience the cultures to which they previously have had no exposure or contact, while affirming their own culture. These skills are invaluable to students as they continue to interact in a society that is becoming increasingly more multicultural.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Members of the LGBR team visited all school sites and come away very impressed with the schools where students and staff wore uniforms. Students and staff exhibited pride in their schools. The schools were orderly and neat in appearance. Students were also uniformly neat and very well behaved. Learning was evident in well run classrooms. Attitudes by all were extremely positive. The atmosphere was conducive to a safe and comfortable learning environment. The best example of the schools exhibiting such a positive environment were the Cooper's Poynt and Riletta T. Cream Schools. There has been much discussion and debate in the state and across the nation over the issue of school uniforms for students. In studies of schools where uniforms have been required the impact upon behavior of students and learning has been reported as positive. Proponents of school uniforms claim that they foster discipline, self-esteem and school pride. Violence and disputes over coveted clothes or pricey tennis shoes and designer name jackets are curbed. Gang recognition clothes become nonexistent. The Long Beach, California Schools require the wearing of school uniforms. Reports of the results of this relatively recent requirement have been overwhelmingly positive. Fighting has been reduced dramatically. Gang activity and recognition has disappeared from the schools. The carrying of weapons has become nearly non-existent. The affluent vs. poor dress differentials and related attitudes and problems have gone away. The students consider the uniforms as their "work clothes" and focus more on school work. This has resulted in improved academics. Opponents state uniforms make little difference, that a shared commitment is what results in positive outcomes. Further, they state that improved academics are the result of other initiatives and not the wearing of uniforms that make a difference. They state too that individuality of students and freedom of expression are taken away through wearing uniforms. In Long Beach, they argue that uniforms do not reduce student differences because freedom of expression and thought still exist - that

you are still who you are. If the outcomes of wearing uniforms are nearly as positive as those in the two Camden schools, the LGBR team supports this concept.

CAPE MAY CITY BOE

Kiwanis Club Youth Services

The Kiwanis Club in the greater Cape May area consists of approximately 100 members. Through the direction of a “Youth Services” committee this club sponsors several programs for the schools and school systems in and around Cape May. Programs include the following:

- the annual pumpkin decorating contest which involves the purchase of approximately 100 pumpkins, refreshments and awards for the students;
- the “Bringing Up Grades” (BUG) Program for each marking period which includes the purchase of buttons, ribbons and certificates;
- the bi-monthly “Conversation Comrades” Program where several Kiwanians have lunch and converse with primary grade students;
- the annual VIP awards which involves the purchase of approximately 50 awards which are presented to students in recognition of scholarship, creativity and improvement;
- the annual Savings Bonds presentations to two outstanding sixth graders;
- the annual donation of \$300+ to the school; and
- the annual awarding of “Lamp of Learning” trophies to 15 students in recognition of student performance.

It should be noted that the Cape May students continue to receive support and recognition from the Kiwanis Club when they move on to the Lower Cape May Regional School System for grades 7 through 12. The club sponsors a number of programs for the students in these schools, including \$7,000 worth of scholarships presented each year to graduating students.

Custodial Practices

The Cape May School District has hired custodians who have diversified skills that enable them to perform most of the repair work throughout the facility. The district has thereby eliminated the need to hire maintenance personnel and has greatly reduced the need to contract out for maintenance work.

The district has also eliminated all custodial overtime by staggering and/or rotating shifts. This scheduling allows for ample coverage at night and on weekends, while controlling costs.

Coast Guard Volunteer Support Programs

The Cape May City School District is enriched by volunteer services from Coast Guard-based families. At no cost to the district, volunteers from the Coast Guard community have organized and presented student support programs such as the Breakfast of

Champions in recognition of honor roll students. They have also served as tutors and guest readers in support of classroom learning activities. Additionally, the Coast Guard B Band and Color Guard have performed for the Cape May Elementary School students.

Education Foundation

The Cape May Education Foundation, a non-profit corporation, was founded for the purpose of providing assistance and support to the educational mission of the Cape May City School District. Interested individuals may make donations to the district through the foundation. Acceptance of gifts from the foundation requires prior approval by the school board. This small foundation, which has \$1,500 as of October, 1999, has nevertheless impacted several programs, including technology and fine arts.

DELAWARE TOWNSHIP BOE

Foundation

The Delaware Township Community Education Foundation, Inc. (DTCEF) was organized in October, 1994 as a nonprofit corporation with a 22 member board of trustees whose purpose was to promote, through financial support and community involvement, an enriched educational experience for local students. Through an annual auction and other fundraising activities, DTCEF had income and expenditures in its 1998 budget of \$29,950. Current priorities reflect a multi-year commitment to the multimedia, arts and science programs at Delaware Township School. More specifically, DTCEF provides a biannual after-school student enrichment program for two days per week and a mini-grant program for teachers. In the past, over 600 books have been purchased, 13 computers have been acquired for the multimedia lab and a long distance learning project has been funded for the new middle school lab. In addition, there has been funding provided for summer training for teachers to incorporate science and technology into the curriculum and "The Arts" have been enhanced through sponsorship of dance, theatre and mural projects.

Efficient Operation

The board and administration have demonstrated a continuing effort to provide a quality education at a reasonable cost. The district employs a leadership team concept, which is cost effective and involves and empowers teachers in the areas of budget management, curriculum and staff development. The district participates in joint purchases of paper, school supplies, diesel fuel, heating oil, etc., as a part of the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission. The district is a member of the School Alliance Insurance Fund (SAIF) with a \$15,000 savings within the first year. The district established a preschool handicapped program to educate its own children and to provide a program on a tuition basis for other school districts. With the introduction of administrative software for special education, district officials were able to reduce the secretarial staff by one employee. The district has obtained monitoring without charge from the Hunterdon County 911 dispatch for its new fire and security alarm systems.

These efficiencies are indicative of the district's continuing success in staying within the range of per pupil expenditure consistent with the Department of Education guidelines.

Community Center

The district, as a community school, has been quite effective in securing the active participation of parents and community members in support of school activities. The school building is used extensively throughout the school year and summer months for after-school and evening school extracurricular activities, township recreational programs and the community sports schedules. The school has achieved an identity as a community center and an asset to the residents of Delaware Township. The school has a very active Parent Teachers Association (PTA), which raises about \$22,000 per year in various fundraising activities, such as flower, clothing and book sales. The PTA funds the summer reading program and the artists in residence program, which addresses the needs within the classrooms.

Communications

The district negotiated an agreement for reimbursement of personal phone calls and takes advantage of discounts offered by the long distance carrier. In the 1996-97 school year, the district saved \$1,020 from personal phone call reimbursements and \$1,278 in long distance discounts.

Energy Management

The district retrofitted the lighting system with an energy efficient T-8 lighting, achieving an estimated annual reduction of electric use of \$12,600. A seven-year finance package with annual payments of \$11,016 created yearly savings of approximately \$1,500.

Technology

The LGBR team commends the DTCEF and PTA for their active role in fundraising for the district contributing over \$85,000 for technology purchases and \$13,448 for staff development in technology. School officials also have obtained Internet access and e-mail services through the donation of a local resident, which are estimated as savings of \$4,200 or more per year.

Transportation

In keeping with the board and administration's commitment to providing quality education at a reasonable cost, the transportation operation in the district is highly efficient, driven not only by safety but by economic operations and district staff who continually seek new methods to expand cost-cutting. From joint purchasing of vehicle fuels with the municipality, to soliciting maintenance repair fees that fall far below the state averages, district staff members have followed the majority of recommended practices for efficiency. Delaware Township has been able to limit benefits, increase productivity, and share services within the custodial and transportation departments by negotiation with the association. With an average route cost of just over \$14,000, and state aid numbers at 78% for transportation (the average in the county is approximately 41.5%), Delaware Township is commended for its efforts in this area.

DELSEA REGIONAL BOE

Technology

Delsea Regional School District has made a strong commitment to technology. The district has an active technology committee that has developed a complete plan, which is reviewed biennially. The board supports this plan by committing the funds necessary for continued forward momentum. The infusion of technology in the district is evidenced in classroom instruction, administrative functions, and business operations. A sampling of these extensive operations follows: A comprehensive website that provides a wealth of information to students, parents, and district staff. The Delsea Regional School website offers visitors: A calendar that highlights a number of activities and important dates in both the school district and the municipality, which the staff is able to update at any time; Student and teacher manuals;

Board policies;

Curriculum guides;

Athletic and extracurricular schedules;

Lesson plans that are electronically generated and maintained by teachers and made available to supervisors; and,

A multitude of links that provide complementary information.

A student record/information system that allows Delsea to record, access, report and manage student information over the web. This system provides real-time information to other staff and administrators, students, and parents. Teachers electronically record attendance and grades and this information is immediately available to parents and students through a confidential login. The administration is able to generate reports with much less effort. Parents are able to contact teachers conveniently using e-mail. A desktop computer in each classroom specifically intended for staff use. Circulation and cataloging automation in each library which facilitates the administrative functions of the librarian. The automation assists the librarian with the process of checking in and out materials, generating an inventory list, determining future needs, and year-end reporting. A television broadcasting studio.

A distance learning lab.

A variety of computer classes including software and hardware instruction such as Computer Applications, Programming, PC Repair and Troubleshooting, and Cisco Network Academy, which teaches students to design, build and maintain computer networks using web technologies.

A computer reconditioning/recycling program. Through its Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program (JROTC),

Delsea obtains used computers from Lockheed Martin. Delsea students recondition these machines in technology classes, and the machines are then recycled into district science classes and special education classes. Several of these machines are now on loan for local police department work and the district plans to place several more on loan in the new Franklin Township public library. By fall 2000, the district had reconditioned and recycled approximately 75 computers in this manner.

Partnerships

The district has benefited from a number of partnerships with different businesses and corporations, who provide services or materials free of charge to the district. District partners have included: Dupont - The Dupont Corporation has donated generously to the Delsea Regional School District and has partnered with the district in many respects to benefit students. Dupont has donated science equipment to the district and provides mentors for the high school engineering students. The company has also provided workshops for staff, and participated in the “Groundhog Career Shadowing Day”, held for sophomores on February 2nd as an introduction to a variety of career choices. To encourage young women, several of Dupont’s female engineers have visited the school to address careers for women in science and math. Kessler Memorial Hospital - This Atlantic County Hospital has partnered with the district to provide first-hand career information and experience to Delsea students. Prentice Hall Publishers - This corporation donated \$25,000 worth of books to help launch the district’s school-wide summer reading program. In addition, the district has benefited from numerous donations of money, goods and services from local businesses, including restaurants, financial institutions, and other enterprises in support of student programs.

Educating Students In-District

Committed to educating district students locally whenever possible, the Delsea Regional School District is recognized for its innovative and cost-efficient programs, which include the following: In-House Alternative Education Program - By creating this program, discussed more fully in the Alternative Education section of this report, the district has realized a savings in tuition and transportation which it would otherwise have incurred in sending these students to out-of-district programs. Most importantly, the district has succeeded in reaching students who otherwise might have left school altogether. In-House Special Education Programs - Over the 1998 and 1999 school years, the district has saved almost \$250,000 in tuition alone by creating programs that allow for the return of special needs students to the Delsea campus.

Number of Days of Peace and Respect

Everyone who steps into the large foyer of the middle school is greeted by two large banners, one each for the seventh and eighth grades, announcing the number of days of “peace and respect” created in the school. The number increases each day there are no fights or major disturbances, and immediately drops to zero when there is an incident. In conjunction with the count, star beams are placed throughout the foyer containing notes from district employees in recognition of positive student behavior. The middle school principal has found that student interest in this program has been positive, and has increased productivity throughout the building. Most importantly, the principal, teachers and staff can give more positive instruction and attention to the full student population.

DOWNE TOWNSHIP BOE

Kid’s Center

The Downe Township Board of Education maintains a program known as the Kid’s Center, which is a school age child care program offering a variety of services and

recreational activities. The program goes beyond the scope of most general day care centers, offering instruction and services in areas such as nutrition education, family life and health practices, general health care and counseling (for problems related to both family and school). The Kid's Center operates Monday through Thursday, 12:00-6:00 p.m., and Friday 12:00-4:00 p.m. The Kid's Center offers recreational activities Monday through Friday, 3:30-5:30 p.m. The Kid's Center Program is funded by a grant from the NJ Department of Human Services and is coordinated through the City of Bridgeton and the Cumberland County Superintendent of Schools. The team feels that the assistance offered to the students currently attending the Downe Township schools makes the Kid's Center a worthwhile and commendable program.

2. Investment Procedures and Policies

The review team conducted an analysis of the school's cash management practices for 1994 and the related investment income for the same year. These practices and the resulting income were compared to the NJ Cash Management Fund. The School Business Administrator substantially exceeded the investment returns of the NJ Cash Management Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1994. Further review showed that the school financial management system, policies and procedures are working well. The team commends the School Business Administrator and the Board of Education for their aggressive cash management and investment practices.

3. Special Education

The team, after a review of operations, commends the district for its special education program. In Cumberland County, the absence of an Educational Service Commission (ESC) and Special School District (SSD) results in a lack of instructional facilities and staff for these intense areas of special education. Downe has provided those services. Using the Department of Education formula for tuition, we believe that the Special Education Instruction program generates sufficient income to support keeping the current educational plan. The program has also achieved significant success in addressing the needs of these students and their families. We would note, however, that the district's classification of students as PI, perceptually impaired, at 14% of the first through eighth grade population is significantly greater than the statewide average of 11.5 percent. While congratulating the district for its efforts to effectively address the special education population we would suggest that careful review of the perceptually impaired classification process be undertaken.

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP BOE

Eagle Enterprises

Eagle Enterprises is an innovative program for special education students in grades 9 through 12. The program involves students working in the Eagle's Nest School Store, the Bagel Shop, the Eagle Greenery, and attending related classes. Through their involvement in this school-to-work approach, students are gaining experience in entry-level retail sales. Students perform tasks that include cash register operations, customer

service, inventory control, receipts, deposits, and plant and floral care. A noteworthy project, that the students have been undertaking each summer, has been the building of custom-made entrepreneurial carts for neighboring school districts. The cart is supplied with equipment (coffee maker, toaster, etc.) and other supplies to operate a stand-alone, portable retail business. The cart is used for the sale of bagels, coffee, flowers and school supplies. This program has received the support of several industries through its partnership with the local Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) office. The profits fund field trips, new equipment, and the purchase of US Savings Bonds, which are presented to participants at an end-of-year awards ceremony. Eagle Enterprises was awarded Best Practice recognition from the New Jersey State Department of Education for this model program in the 1995-96 school year. Also, the program was given the New Jersey Administrators' Association School/Business Partnership Award in 1995.

Egg Harbor Township Education Foundation

The Egg Harbor Township Education Foundation was incorporated in 1984. A board of trustees consisting of thirty-five parents, residents, educators and community leaders administers the foundation. Through tax-deductible contributions, memorials or gifts, the foundation is able to provide scholarships and special projects for the students of Egg Harbor Township. Scholarships are awarded to graduating Egg Harbor Township High School seniors, who have exhibited a high level of academic achievement and community service. Each scholarship is \$2,000. The number of students receiving the scholarships is based upon the amount of revenues contributed each year. In 1998, seven students were awarded scholarships; in 1999 six students were awarded scholarships. The foundation also awards annual mini-grants to educators and support staff who plan and implement innovative educational programs for the students of Egg Harbor Township. The grants are \$500 per staff member. In the 1998-99 school year, 10 mini-grants were awarded for programs that will be implemented during the year. The foundation sponsors an annual career fair for students from high schools throughout Atlantic and Cape May Counties. The students meet with local businesses, trades, armed services and technical schools to discuss job opportunities and careers. The sources of revenues to fund the foundation's programs are from an annual golf tournament, a dinner theater program, contributions made to private and memorial scholarship funds, and employee donations. Employee donations are made through a payroll deduction plan. The scholarship funds are invested in money market funds for high interest gains. As of April, 1999, the funds totaled approximately \$99,000. Each year the board of trustees votes upon the number of scholarships and mini-grants to award. Since its inception, the foundation awarded \$41,000 in scholarships to graduating seniors, provided \$13,500 in staff mini grants for innovative educational projects, and sponsored annual career fairs. The Egg Harbor Township Foundation is meeting its goals in promoting excellence in education for all students and creating a bond between the community and its schools. The foundation is recognized for its efforts and is commended for its contributions to the district.

Latchkey Program-KIDSCLUB

The Egg Harbor School District instituted a latchkey program approximately eleven years ago. The program is available to all students in grades K-6. Most recently, the district entitled the program KidsClub. The program consists of a morning program held from

7:30 a.m. until classes begin. The afternoon program begins at the close of school until 6:00 p.m. The program is based in Slaybaugh and Davenport Elementary schools and the Intermediate School. Students from Swift Elementary School are bused to the nearby Slaybaugh School. The sixth graders attending the Middle School are bused to the Intermediate School. Plans for the 1999-00 school year include opening an additional program at the Swift School, eliminating busing students to a program in another school. The review of the financial records of the program indicated, that according to the Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP), the Latchkey Program operations are appropriately recorded in the enterprise fund. The enterprise fund is an account that is similar to a private business enterprise, which is designed and capable of being operated at a profit and allows reserves to be accumulated. According to the CAFR's for the years ending June, 1996, June, 1997, and June, 1998, the financial records are as follows:

[see report]

Financially, the program has been a profitable one. The past three years of operation have resulted in retained earnings of \$31,347. A \$5 registration fee is charged per child. An hourly rate of \$2 is charged for those parents who earn \$350 or less per week. A \$3 hourly rate is charged for those who earn \$351 or more per week. If two or more children from the same family attend, a \$1 per hour discount is given. The program employs certified teachers and aides. Some of the aides are high school students. The program provides help with homework, recreational activities and creative arts. Snacks are provided in both the morning and afternoon sessions. Attendance records indicate that the before-school average enrollments for the 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years were 53, 55, and 55, respectively. After-school average enrollments for these years were 83, 88, 99. The number of students has increased. Two teachers directed the program. They were paid an hourly rate of \$21. In the 1997-98 school year, they earned a total of \$16,033.50. The district employed a community education coordinator on July 1, 1999 to run the Latchkey Program as well as the Adult Evening School. She is employed on a 12-month contract, with benefits, at an annual salary of \$32,000. A portion of her salary will be charged to the Latchkey Program and a portion to the Adult Evening School. Plans to expand the program include a summer program as well as Saturday activities for children. This program is servicing the needs of the community by providing an affordable service to parents and providing a beneficial program for the students by using the program time for quality activities.

Teacher Mentor Program

The Egg Harbor Township School District operates a Teacher Mentor Program to provide support services to high school students who are having interpersonal and/or school-related difficulties. This program is under the direction of a teacher mentor coordinator, the Student Assistance Coordinator (SAC) and the district's core team, consisting of a committee of professional staff members. Over 70 volunteer teachers and over 80 students participate in this program. Students are referred to this program by the core team and are matched up with a teacher, with whom they meet on a regular basis outside the student's academic program. The student's difficulties are discussed and the teacher provides emotional support and encouragement. The mentoring discussions include

issues such as self-esteem, motivation, and goal setting. The mentor develops, with the student, an action plan focused on activities directed towards achieving personal, career and educational goals. The district reported that this program has been successful for the majority of students involved and the teachers who are mentors have been enthusiastic about the program. Plans are to expand the program into the middle school. The district and staff is to be commended for this program. It provides a safe and caring environment for students.

FRANKLYN TOWNSHIP BOE

Perfect Attendance Incentive

Included in the district's collective bargaining agreements and the non-unit contracts is a provision that those who have been employed by the district for the full year and have attained a perfect attendance record during that period will have two personal leave days converted to their accumulated sick leave at the end of the respective contractual year. These efforts are also recognized at a public meeting where each employee having perfect attendance is presented with a plaque and a \$200 savings bond. This personal incentive to the individual employee helps the district lower the cost of employee absences and provides a meaningful reward to employees for perfect attendance. Together with the district's provisions for pay out of accumulated sick leave at the time of severance, this incentive makes for prudent fiscal policy.

Environmental Right-to Know Training

In school year 1999-00, the district obtained from its insurer free environmental right-to-know training for district employees. Alternatively, the district has participated in the Gloucester County Environmental Consortium which provides low cost environmental right-to-know training to school district employees throughout Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland counties.

Community Support

Each of the district's three schools has benefited greatly from the community support offered through the individual PTAs. At all three schools, the PTAs' Inclement Weather Coordinators further the groups' focus on safety and supplement the work of district personnel. Through a telephone network, the PTA coordinators alert parents when inclement weather necessitates emergency school closings at irregular hours. Additional examples of PTA volunteerism abound in the district. Working with the administration, the PTA at the Marie F. Janvier School, helped expand the DARE program into the first and second grades. PTA volunteers assist the librarian at the Main Road School by performing a variety of tasks. At Reutter School, the PTA raised funds toward the purchase of a weather tower. Thanks to these efforts and additional contributions provided by local businesses, the Reutter School is now one of three locations in Gloucester County that provide local weather reports to the Philadelphia affiliate of a national television company. Their reports, together with district, school and grade-level identifying information, are broadcast throughout the Delaware Valley.

Internal Organization

The district's administrative building, constructed in the early 1990s, reflects a well-planned marriage of design and function. The layout of the building aides in the efficient organization and unimpeded flow of district business, with administrative offices situated to afford the best utilization of shared personnel and equipment. The team found that the administrative office and the business offices were particularly well organized. The business office's accounting department is one example of the district's organizational efficacy, where personnel follow efficient office practices along with strict purchasing controls. District records retention adheres to state requirements, and old records are kept in an orderly fashion for easy retrieval.

Diversity of Shared Services

The district has been most creative in initiating shared services and in joining with established consortiums to obtain the most competitive pricing in an effort to effect cost savings. With regard to personnel, the district shares two supervisory positions with neighboring Elk Township School District: curriculum coordinator; and network engineer. (See the shared services section of this report.)

Educational Productivity Enhancement

The district administration has succeeded in reducing the amount of half-day instructional time in the district. Only three half days were scheduled in the Franklin Township Public Schools on the 1999-00 school calendar; one half-day before the end of the year holidays, and two at the end of the school year. While furthering the educational goals of the district and, thereby, directly benefiting the students, full school days are also the most fiscally efficient means of operation.

Technological Component of Teacher Evaluation

For the 2000-01 school year, the district superintendent has made "Integration of Technology into Instruction" one of 15 major areas reviewed in teacher evaluations, and has included technological components in six of the remaining fourteen teacher evaluation areas. Given today's emphasis on technological staff development, incorporation of technological components into staff evaluations provides all parties with pertinent information. The staff member receives feedback on technological implementation and innovation and the district gets an opportunity to assess on-the-job effectiveness of expenditures in this area.

FRENCHTOWN BOE

"Mini" Gifted and Talented Program

In addition to their full-fledged gifted and talented program, the Frenchtown School offers a "mini" program, oriented to one particular subject per marking period. Children in grades 3 through 8 who do not qualify for the main program by virtue of test scores, are considered for participation in the mini program based upon recommendations from teachers who identify a "spark" within them towards some particular subject area. The benefit of this program is that children who would normally not be so recognized are

afforded an opportunity for special attention and instruction in an area in which they have demonstrated interest or above-average competence, and hence are granted inclusion in a special academic group.

At the time of our review there were 40 participants in the program, as compared to 15 participants in the main program. The mini program is an exciting way to encourage learning and nurture academic interest among a larger group of students who might otherwise be overlooked. Based on our observations, the review team believes that the Frenchtown school district is making good use of their tax dollars by supporting this program.

Community Relations

To borrow a phrase, “No *school* is an island”, but rather exists within and as part of the community. While friction can sometimes exist between a given municipality and the school administration, the review team was pleased to note several examples of cooperation and community involvement in the Frenchtown School District. Chief among these was the establishment of a committee comprising representatives from the community, parents, the School Board, and administration, formed to evaluate the facilities at the school for the purpose of determining physical conditions as well as the need for possible improvements, additions and new facilities. The committee engaged the services of an architectural firm to assist them in this endeavor. A report containing the committee’s findings and various options was issued in December 1997. Upon its tour of the facility, the review team noted the lack of suitable space for several programs and support functions. We will touch on some of these in the findings and recommendations section, and commend the district for its proactive, cooperative approach toward resolving the facility issues.

At a recent Board meeting, a member proposed opening the school to the community one evening a week for adult use of the basketball court. This will afford an opportunity for some who may feel they receive no benefit from the school to do so. The cooperative attitude in Frenchtown is a reciprocal arrangement, as evidenced by a resident’s recent donation of shrubbery along with his time and effort to landscape the front of the school building.

On more than one occasion the review team was told that the school both attracts and keeps people in the community; almost everyone the team interviewed appears to be proud of the school, and to have a stake in its continued operation and success. Having as many members of the “community”, in the broadest sense of the word, involved as possible will help to ensure this result.

Grants

In order to maximize on the amount of grant money received, Frenchtown School collaborates with five other surrounding school districts and applies as a consortium. All the schools benefit from this practice, in that resources are pooled and programs made available to all the districts’ children. A recent example is a grant received to provide a peer counseling program for the upper grade students. On their own, Frenchtown would

not have received enough funding to enable them to provide the program, but through a shared arrangement, they and the other districts can offer this and other future programs to their students.

GLASSBORO BOE

INTERNAL SAVINGS INITIATIVES

Since the current business administrator began his position in February, 1996, he, the superintendent and board have made a renewed and concerted effort at cost savings. Initiatives taken and savings either realized or projected have been identified and listed. This listing is updated monthly for the board and public's awareness with a running total of savings provided. To date (through October 15), savings have been estimated to be in excess of \$2,000,000. Portions of these savings are immediate, some are one time savings while others are ongoing or will be realized in the future. Some have been tallied over the life of the projected savings, i.e., over a two, three, five or ten year period. And, some are guesstimates.

Examples of savings initiatives included renegotiating service and vendor contracts, changes in insurance carriers and insurance plans, pooled purchasing with other districts, shopping for the best price and the anticipated sale of the vacated Academy Street School. Some of the initiatives would have occurred or were already in the planning while others are the result of new and direct effort. Recording an updated monthly listing and communicating the fact that efforts are occurring to realize savings is a practice we would encourage other districts to consider.

FACILITIES AD HOC COMMITTEE

The district is in the process of determining appropriate steps to address deteriorating facilities. Considerations are being given to repairs, renovations and/or replacement and the inclusion of updated technology capability. In its planning process, a Facilities Ad Hoc Committee made up of school and community officials staff, students, organizations and residents was developed to discuss conditions, needs and anticipated costs. Goals were established and various options were considered. Recommendations were made for consideration by the board of education. Approximately 40 people participated in a series of four or five meetings. These were chaired by the superintendent. The review team observed two of these sessions. Good dialog took place with divergent view points expressed. Various resources were used in determining needs and costs as well as considering the experiences of another district with their planning for a building program referendum. We applaud the inclusion of a broad representation of the community in addressing a major and costly issue at the outset of the planning process.

GENESIS

GENESIS is a family based educational program designed for low-income families with children age five and under that encourages parent involvement in the child's educational development. It is sponsored and funded in cooperation with the Glassboro Housing Authority, Gloucester County Office of Municipal Services and Gloucester County Board

of Chosen Freeholders. The program is operated by the Glassboro School District. A staff of a teacher and four aides work with between 32 and 40 children. Parents are required to participate at varying times weekly. It is housed on-site in a public housing project, thus facilitating attendance and parent participation.

The program emphasizes developmental skills and problem solving through exploration and experiences in readiness for school when age eligible. It provides opportunity to enjoy success to build confidence and self esteem. It teaches children to gain independence and self control while learning and working cooperatively. For parents, GENESIS teaches parenting skills and fosters positive attitudes toward a child's development and education. Parents participate in the planning of learning activities of their children. GENESIS was honored by the New Jersey School Boards Association with its 1994 "School Leader Award."

WORKSHOP II

Workshop II offers an alternative special education program for students with learning, adjustment and/or behavioral problems. A major emphasis of this program is to teach students responsible behavior and vocational skills. Nineteen students participate under the tutelage of three teachers. On-the-job training in printing, maintenance and landscaping is emphasized along with academic instruction at the high school level. Practical application of skills learned are utilized in a business fashion in the district for which students can earn a stipend. In return, small jobs are accomplished in the district at low dollar cost but with high personal return for the students.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

Glassboro High School houses and the district operates the Gloucester County Alternative High School. Approximately 10 full time and 19 part time students from around Gloucester County who require an alternative option to their regular community day high school attend this evening program. Glassboro made a good business decision when they accepted this program when other districts in the county would not. The district receives a small stipend in exchange for this service to the county.

GLASSBORO PEOPLE IN TRANSITION PROGRAM

This program serves displaced homemakers and their children by coordinating job training, life-skills training and educational opportunities as well as counseling and support services. This program is sponsored in cooperation with Gloucester County College, Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders and local social service agencies. It is administered from the district central offices by a program coordinator. The program has four components including life training skills, educational remediation, career decision making and job development. There were 47 people participating in the program during the LGBR visit. This multi-faceted program has been a catalyst for providing a way out of total reliance on public assistance as a means of support for themselves and their children. Performance reports for 1995/96 indicate the displaced homemakers program went beyond its stated goals and objectives. This allowed for expansion by attaching to other county programs that provide opportunities in computer literacy, life training skills and divorce recovery workshops. Articulation agreements

have been established with People in Transition, AGE/ABE/GED/ESL and Family Development Program (Gloucester County College), Robins Nest (family outreach counseling program), Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service (parenting education), Glassboro Housing Authority and GENESIS preschool program (Ellis Manor Housing Project), Glassboro Child Development Center (daycare) and the Newman Center at Rowan University (Tutoring).

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

An organized educational foundation supports the district through donations and fund raisers having raised approximately \$8,000 during the past year. These moneys are earmarked for innovative teacher grants in the areas of science and technology. The foundation operates outside of the district funds under a legal charter. Although educational foundations have been found to be successful in Glassboro and other school districts, caution is advised regarding participation and leadership in the foundation by elected officials and administrators.

ENERGY SAVINGS

The district has contracted with an energy management company to retrofit all schools' heating and air conditioning units and incorporate energy savings measures. This contract is paid out of guaranteed energy savings at no cost to the district and with a guaranteed return of energy cost savings.

CHERRY HILL SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Glassboro School District has a unique arrangement with a private non-profit organization to provide special education services. The Cherry Hill Alternative High School, based in Cherry Hill, NJ, provides one class for Glassboro emotionally disturbed children who need extensive services and they use a district facility at no charge. The class size ranges from nine to twelve students. The children, the school, and the private organization all gain by this unique arrangement.

The school gains because it does not have to hire specially trained and experienced staff for a unique service that may not be needed in the future. It also saves money by avoiding the high transportation costs usually associated with out-of-district placement. These costs equal approximately \$3,381 per student netting a savings of \$33,810 for the 10 participants. Money, therefore, goes into programming rather than transportation. The children benefit because they are receiving needed services by specially trained and experienced staff. In addition, since they receive service in the district they avoid spending long hours on buses traveling outside the district.

The organization that provides this service benefits because it retains skilled staff who continue to get more experience. In addition, they are expanding their service by providing an "outreach" type service further helping their bottom line. And, they avoid the time and costs associated with purchasing and maintaining buildings which is ancillary to their core mission.

EXTENDED DAY KINDERGARTEN BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM

The district provides an extended day kindergarten program two afternoons per week beyond the regular half day program to some 45 identified basic skills students out of a total kindergarten population of 211 children. The regular kindergarten program is a half day program. The special education kindergarten level program is a full day program. In addition to the two afternoons of intensified instruction, these children are provided with basic skills assistance during their regular morning program instruction. This extended day program is intended to boost students skills in readiness for first grade and as a preventative measure to potential classification and placement in special education programs. This preventative program results in savings of special education costs.

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP BOE (ATLANTIC COUNTY)

Special Education Autism Program

In the 1998-99 school year, the Hamilton School District introduced an in-house autism program as part of its curriculum. This autism program currently services children ages three through seven at the Shaner Elementary School. The program utilizes the consultant services of a foundation with recognized experts in the field of autism. The classroom is staffed by a teacher of the handicapped and instructional aides who service the individual needs of the students. The foundation consults with and provides in-service training to the teachers, aides, child study team members and parents. Within the classroom, the discrete trail method of instruction is utilized. Socialization activities, social role modeling and the related services of occupational, physical and speech therapy are delivered in accordance with the children's Individual Education Plans (IEP's).

The opportunity for these students to remain in the community school also allows for mainstreaming where appropriate. The establishment of this program is financially prudent, as these students would otherwise receive a similar educational program at a substantially higher cost in an out-of-district placement. During the 1998-99 school year, six students were serviced by the district's in-house autism program at an estimated cost of \$110,000 or \$18,333 per student. The county special service school district's annual cost (including transportation) for an autistic student was approximately \$30,000 per student. (The approximate cost to send an autistic student to a private school is over \$40,000.) By having an in-house autism program for six students, the district is saving a minimum of \$70,000 per year.

Special Education Pupil Assistance Committee (SEPAC)

The Special Education Pupil Assistance Committee (SEPAC) at the district's Hess School is a specialized committee that is convened on a scheduled basis to discuss concerns and problems related to students currently eligible for special education and related services. The membership of the committee includes, but is not limited to, child study team members, special education teachers, and school administrators. The purpose of SEPAC is to generate educational recommendations and to further accommodate students experiencing behavior problems, social difficulties and limited academic achievement.

The members of the committee mentor and support the teachers involved with implementing suggested modifications. These meetings take place throughout the year, in addition to the regularly scheduled Annual Review/I.E.P. meetings. This intervention is successful in helping students remain in the district, offering the least restrictive environment. Depending on the specific disability, the cost (tuition/transportation) to send a student out-of-district would range from \$25,000 to over \$35,000. Educating an SE student within the district is estimated to cost approximately \$15,000 per year. The minimum cost savings for the district to keep an SE student within the district is estimated at \$10,000 per student. Since there is no additional cost for the district to maintain SEPAC, any intervention to keep the district's SE students in-house poses substantial savings for the district.

Hamilton Township Education Fund, Inc.

The Hamilton Township Education Fund, Inc., incorporated in 1981, is a non-profit community organization. Its mission is to secure contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations to benefit students in the school district. A board of trustees governs the corporation. Each year the teaching staff is given an opportunity to submit a proposal for a mini-grant. The board of trustees selects several proposals and provides funds for educational improvement projects for the students. An average of five mini-grants is selected each year. Projects include the following:

- Weather Video Production
- An Ornithological Study of Bird Identification
- Greenhouse Project
- Art & Science Mural
- New Jersey Studies Program
- Sports Author Visitation
- Butterfly Wildlife Garden
- Stain Glass Windows
- School Quilt

The mini-grants have been selected to benefit many grade levels as well as interest areas. This foundation is beneficial to the entire school system.

Custodial Services

The district is to be commended for taking positive initiatives to provide a management structure and staffing levels (numbers, shift assignments and use of part-time staff where necessary) to provide clean schools in a cost-effective manner. Through the implementation of shift supervision and a new salary tier for janitors, it is estimated that the district will save an estimated \$51,000 per year in custodial costs.

Computer Technology

The district is participating in Bell Atlantic's New Jersey Program and has contracts for frame relay and ATM services, with discounts on the service free customer premise equipment. More than \$41,000 has been given to the district, and it is projected that the district will save more than \$18,000 on additional front-end equipment for its network.

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP BOE (MERCER COUNTY)

1. Energy Saving

The "Green Light" Program, an initiative being undertaken with PSE&G, involves conversion of all lighting in the schools to a more energy efficient lighting system. The utility electric bill for a typical year is more than \$1,000,000 and the projected savings for the project is approximately \$400,000 per year. The savings will be "shared" with PSE&G, which means that the Hamilton School District can use its savings to cover the expense of installing the lighting. Benefits of the "Green Light" Program include the following:

- Energy consumption for lighting is expected to be reduced by 40%.
- The only required maintenance will be the replacement of bulbs (which have a three to four year life span.)
- The variety of bulbs used for lighting will be reduced from approximately 80 to 6 standard types.

The program will result in significant upgrading of antiquated lighting systems in a number of schools.

2. Computerized Substitute Calling System

Personnel's substitute calling system is computerized and very efficient. This system logs in all absenteeism and permits staff to fill those voids rapidly. The system has paid for itself, according to Hamilton officials. In the future, this system will also be used to monitor attendance.

3. Intergenerational Learning Through Volunteerism

Since 1980, the Hamilton School District has sponsored a senior volunteer program called Project ROBIN (Retired Older Buddy Is Needed). Maintaining a fairly steady participation of 90 senior citizens, the program currently serves 14 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 2 high schools. It is administered by its founder, a Hamilton elementary school teacher who is paid as a project coordinator. Program goals include instilling positive views about aging and increasing individualized instruction for students, and encouraging positive attitudes toward education and personal satisfaction among the community's older adults. Volunteers typically serve as classroom, library and art aides, trip chaperones, tutors, or as workers in a school's attendance office. Senior volunteers are recruited by the project coordinator at various local senior citizen clubs and meetings throughout the year. She visits each prospective volunteer at his or her home for an interview and requires references. Several 10 hours of initial orientation are provided to the 10-15 new volunteers each year. Each is given a handbook to guide them in school and program policy. Time donated ranges from a couple of hours per week to full-time. Informal evaluation is provided by the coordinator through periodic phone checks with volunteers and conversations with supervising teachers/personnel. An annual

recognition luncheon is sponsored by the school district at which token gifts are presented to the volunteers. The Board budgeted \$4,477 in 1994-95 for the project coordinator's salary.

4. Staff Development

The Hamilton Township School Board offers a series of informative workshops to the teachers and parents of Hamilton Township. It also offers outside school districts participation in the staff development courses on a tuition basis. The district's policy allows teachers to voluntarily sign-up for staff development. Board policy does not limit the amount of staff development classes that an individual teacher can sign up for; in fact, it encourages staff participation and provides for a substitute to fill in for that regular staff member. The staff development programs are offered to all instructional staff within the district. The objective is to help staff improve their daily management of the learning process for their students and to improve student results. Areas covered are Instructional Theory Into Practice, Learning Systems of Children, Classroom Management, and Cooperative Learning and Thinking Skills.

Uniquely, the Hamilton Township staff development team offers a Parent Education Night, sponsored by the Township Education Association and PTA Committee. These evenings encourage teacher-parent communication which enhances understanding of the district's educational processes. Some of the offered courses include drug awareness, learning styles, college selection, specifics of the language and mathematics programs, parental effectiveness in skill building, overview of special education, gifted and talented, and student self-esteem.

HILLSBOROUGH BOE

Professional Development

In the area of professional development, the district has initiated some cost savings measures. The locally delivered Continuing Education Units (CEU) program provides locally targeted training experiences for staff at a significantly reduced cost to the district. Moreover, the district participates with both the College of New Jersey and Princeton University in a consortium of districts where high quality staff development is provided at a reasonable cost to the district. Teachers as Scholars (TAS) is a new partnership between Princeton University and surrounding school districts, including the Hillsborough School District, to provide scholarly and intellectually engaging opportunities for teachers. The program is organized and administered through the University's teacher preparation program. Princeton faculty and staff teach the three or four-day seminars for area teachers over three to eight weeks during a semester. Seminars cover a wide range of topics and subject areas and are open to elementary and secondary level teachers from all subject areas. Local school districts provide substitute teachers and release time for teachers on seminar days.

In the near future the Regional Cable Network has agreed to install without charge to the local school district a fiber optic institutional network for the 10 school sites and the

township. The value of this installation is estimated as roughly \$1 million. After a community-based needs assessment, this agreement was reached during negotiations for contract renewal with the cable company. The benefits to the school district will be faster, more efficient communications, as well as a reduction in phone line annual costs of about \$40,000.

The district has been a recipient of New Jersey State Systemic Initiative (NJSSI) grants through Rutgers University, with an initial three-year grant of about \$150,000 in staff development/materials procurement grant dollars. The district currently uses an additional \$15,000 in NJSSI funds to train staff and acquire elementary and middle school instructional supplies.

In recent years, the district has been successful in controlling health care benefits costs through the movement of many employees to a managed care program. Through an administrative initiative, school officials were able to motivate some employees to utilize the managed care options. Additionally, negotiations with the local bargaining units resulted in savings. All administrative and supervisory personnel currently make contributions to their health insurance premiums, which now collectively amounts to savings of \$28,000 annually. Further, the Hillsborough Education Association (HEA) provides for a “tiered” arrangement wherein new employees in the first three years of employment receive without charge only the Designated Provided Program (DPP) coverage by the school district. This arrangement, with nearly half of the membership participating in the DPP rather than a traditional plan, currently saves the school district about \$575,000 annually.

The district receives annual financial support from a number of supportive partners. Among those contributing annually are:

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- Hillsborough Life Skills Committee - \$5,000.
- Hillsborough Education Foundation - \$15,000.
- Hillsborough/Millstone Municipal Alliance - \$20,000.
- Home and School Associations - \$100,000.

The review team was favorably impressed with the continuing attention by Hillsborough school officials to cost effectiveness in providing a quality education and to the administrative controls in place to implement the related decisions.

HILLSIDE

Internal Savings Initiatives

In recent years, the Hillside Schools have taken action to identify and effect cost savings. The superintendent and school business administrator have been an effective team in these economies. This has been very important in economically stressed Hillside. Examples of savings initiatives include: food and transportation services being provided

by private contractors, reduction in custodial costs through staff reductions, and pooled purchasing with other districts.

In other communities, savings either realized or projected have been identified and listed for the information of the board of education and the community. The list is updated regularly with a running total of savings being provided. A procedure such as described above might be helpful in Hillside in order to let citizens and staff know about positive action in saving tax dollars.

The district is to be commended for participating in shared purchasing programs through the Union County Educational Services Commission for electricity, natural gas, and heating oil. Automobile fuel is purchased in cooperation with the township of Hillside, which participates in the Union County Cooperative Purchasing Plan.

Cooperative Programs With Colleges

The Hillside schools have a variety of cooperative programs and services with colleges near and far—from hometown Kean to Montclair and Temple Universities. The superintendent and the board of education have excellent ideas, which broaden the resources available to staff, students, and community through these programs. Kean College, especially, can offer much to Hillside in the areas of fine and performing arts experiences.

Technology is another field in which Kean and Hillside should be able to cooperate. Staff development could be made available through instructional television at the George Washington School. Kean College might also offer credit for distance learning courses for high school students. We commend the superintendent and the Hillside Board of Education for reaching out to share the good things of the school district with higher educational institutions. We hope that the creativity of the Hillside schools will be rewarded by greater involvement with neighboring colleges.

Hillside Schools Foundation

A Hillside Schools Foundation has been established. Given the financial difficulties of school funding in Hillside, the Local Government Budget Review (LGBR) team urges the district to help the foundation aggressively pursue creative avenues to gain additional revenue. Similar foundations are active in other districts in New Jersey. The one in Totowa can provide a great deal of information about foundation activities.

Army Junior R.O.T.C.

The United States Army Junior R.O.T.C. program at Hillside High School is a source of pride and student involvement. The team was impressed with the esprit de corps of the R.O.T.C. members and their faculty. The program provides learning about self-discipline, team work, and striving for high goals to its cadets. The federal government pays for a portion of the cost of this program.

Academic Initiatives at Hillside High

The board of education and the faculty of Hillside High School are making positive efforts to increase academic achievement through additional advanced placement courses as well as an academic summer camp to help students with basic skill acquisition and test taking skills. We applaud the work of all who seek to improve learning through academic initiatives at the high school. These activities reduce potential costs if students were to fail courses and have to retake them.

Honors Field Trips at the George Washington School

A committee of parents, teachers, and the principal of the school devised a program of field trips as a counterbalance to peer pressure that was causing students to avoid classroom success. Initially, a field trip to the Meadowlands sports complex was established for honor roll students. The event included a tour and gifts from the teams that use the facility. The students arrived back at the school in time to let classmates see the tangible reward of classroom excellence. The next trip, sites vary, required a larger bus. Now three buses are needed for the thrice a year trips. For some students honor roll standing is not possible. The school permits these students, with the advice of teachers, to set learning goals in an individual program. Those who achieve two-thirds or more of these goals are permitted to go on the last trip of the year. The school P.T.O. and parents help with transportation costs.

Afternoon Curriculum Planning

The district's five-year curriculum plan provides essential coverage for the review and upgrading of its course offerings for the prescribed learning program. Curriculum review activities are conducted during the Monday afternoon workshop sessions. In this way the district is able to save money that would otherwise have to be spent for summer employment of staff

HOPEWELL VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Volunteerism

The district has had significant success in the amount of volunteer service rendered in its schools to assist and work with its staff to help assure students a well rounded educational program and supportive activities. During the 1997-98 school year, substantially more than 6,000 hours of volunteer services were provided for a wide variety of programs and activities, ranging from assisting as chaperones on extended trips to being tutors for students exhibiting a need for such services.

Foundations, Grants, PTO Contributions and Community Support

Each school has an active and very supportive PTO, which provided financial assistance to enable it to meet certain specific needs. This assistance may be in the form of subsidies for some equipment, materials and supplies that staff is unable to get through the regular budgetary process, or to promote a major project such as the Toll Gate Grammar Elementary School playground which cost nearly \$65,000, or money to supplement the cost of various activities to enable all students to participate in spite of personal financial limitations. The Timberlane School PTA budget for 1998-99 alone, for example, is

\$19,200 to provide students with activities, assemblies and field trips, teachers with grants for special projects, \$5 per student for school use, equipment for the building and miscellaneous needs.

Over a period of time the individual schools have developed relationships with local businesses which have contributed funds and services to enhance the schools' programs. Demonstrating a belief in the community's students and a firm commitment to supporting the district's educational programs, the most prominent and consistent contributor is the Pennington Market. This business helps by providing employment opportunities for students, aiding students financially so they can participate in some activities, giving money for specific fund raising events, and helping through various other contributions supporting school activities.

There has been considerable support for the Hopewell Valley Foundation over the past four years. There have been career days, community science fairs, an arts festival, and computer contributions, as well as other activities to raise funds to support the foundation. A major pharmaceutical firm made a large donation of furniture. Local universities also assist the district in the area of staff development.

Health Benefits Cost Sharing

The district has had a practice of health benefits cost sharing with its employees for seven years at a rate of five percent of the cost of services requested. Fortune 500 companies have been passing on some of the burden of the costs of health benefits to their employees and most of the public sector employees believe themselves to be immune to these elements of the corporate world. Health benefits costs have been escalating at a higher rate than inflation for the past decade. In order to keep school budgets under control, districts need to use various means such as cost sharing and keeping a vigilant eye upon the marketplace as well as keeping up with realistic deductibles and co-pays. The teachers in this district recognize the costs of these benefits and contribute a portion toward those costs. Recent negotiations resulted in increased contributions and co-pays.

Pre-Kindergarten Special Education Class

The district took various actions in creating a pre-kindergarten special education class and the return of out-of-district placed students resulting in savings of over \$100,000.

Spectrum

The district has implemented a very comprehensive enrichment program called "Spectrum" to enhance the educational offerings in grades two through five. The uniqueness of the program is its three levels (Types I, II and III), which were phased in over a three year period, and in the inclusion of all children. The first level, Type I, involves full class participation in activities such as field trips and lectures. The second, Type II, may be whole class or group activities involving "how-to skills". Type III activities which include approximately 120 children, allows individuals or small groups of students to pursue specific investigative projects in keeping with each student's special interests, creative talents, commitment and abilities. Unlike other "gifted and talented" programs, Spectrum provides enrichment and challenge to all children, rather than a

selected few. The review team had an opportunity to visit a Type III Spectrum fair where students could exhibit and explain their projects. This gave students an opportunity for exposure and recognition for their extra efforts. In addition to the three levels, Spectrum offers advanced math to high achieving students, some mini courses, enrichment clusters that children can choose, academic choice time and the Junior Great Books Program for grade 3 - 5 advanced readers.

A strength of the program is the volunteers who help run and supervise many of the activities and the some 67 mentors who work with and advise children with specialty areas and projects. This is quite cost effective for it allows for expansion of the program, inclusion of activities that could not be provided without the expertise and talents of the mentors and volunteers, and the fact that additional staff do not have to be employed to provide the Spectrum program.

Rental of Space

The district generates income by rental of space to two after school and pre-school care programs. Some \$18,600 is raised from the two programs, which provide a service to parents of the community. An additional \$4,375 is earned from the rental of gymnasium space in the administration building (formerly a school) to the YMCA for its activities and programs.

Communications

The district and individual schools provide each student with handbooks that provide significant information about rules and procedures, behavior and attendance policies, grading procedures and reporting dates, curricular and extracurricular offerings, services and staff directories and calendars of school dates and events. This provides not only pertinent information but a ready reference in each home to what parents and students need to know. It also avoids the need for many phone calls and miscommunication because someone "didn't know".

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP BOE

The Jefferson Township School District has a student enrollment, which is large enough to permit cost-effective operations. With the construction of the high school and middle school in a relatively central location and by organizing the six elementary schools by grade levels near the respective population centers on each side of the township, district officials have endeavored to assure relatively efficient operation. Population growth within the township will provide the opportunity in the near future to consolidate the number of elementary school buildings for even more effective utilization of staff. Within Jefferson Township, there are the usual differences of opinion about the level of funding for the local public schools and some individuals advocate additional moneys for specific program offerings and quality. Primarily due to low beginning salaries, the district has experienced some difficulty in recruiting, selecting and retaining professional staff, both instructional and administrative. However, for the purposes of this review it is quite obvious from the data presented in this report that the Jefferson Township School District

is quite cost effective in comparison with other comparable school districts. Sections of the report provide recommendations for specific modifications in budgetary and spending allocations, purchasing practices, etc., which would make the district more efficient in terms of meeting identified unmet needs without significant additional cost. Nevertheless, **district officials are commended for the overall cost-effective manner in which the district is currently operated.**

Parent organizations have made significant contributions to the public schools in Jefferson Township. For the third year, the Milton Tri-School PTA held Saturday enrichment programs for 250 students and the parents provided the student transportation. Parent volunteers provided instruction on skills such as woodworking, calligraphy, etc., in the Middle School on four Saturdays. The PTA raises about \$25,000 annually with market days, book fairs, box top and magazine drives, etc., and provides school programs, such as assembly programs, field days, cultural activities, and planetarium. The PTA promotes parent education through literature and guest speakers and provides parent volunteers for selected activities as requested by school officials.

The Jefferson Consolidated PTA is very active in the three elementary schools, which are represented by parents living in the Lake Hopatcong or southwestern area of the township. Each classroom has been provided with a television and VCR. In addition, a digital video camera and digital cameras have been purchased. Money has been provided for programming, such as arts education in fourth grade. This PTA has a budget of over \$50,000 per year and raises money in the fall with wrapping paper and gift sales and in the spring with “tricky tray” ticket sales.

As indicated under the Shared Services section of this report, school district officials have a relatively good relationship with township officials. The school district uses the township garage for the maintenance and repair of school buses and other vehicles. The township uses the first five bays of the garage and the school district uses another three bays. The township has one mechanic and the school district has three mechanics. The Jefferson Township School District owns about 20 buses, two trucks, several tractors and mowers and a cafeteria delivery vehicle. By the joint use of the municipal garage, the Jefferson Township School District reportedly saves about \$72,000 annually in rental costs.

A grant for a project entitled “COPS in Schools” was obtained through a partnership agreement between the Jefferson Township Board of Education and the Jefferson Township Police Department. As the result of the grant, one police officer spends about 30 hours per week in the middle school and high school. With school and police administrators, teachers, parents and the school resource police officer working together, the police department hopes to provide early intervention into potential problems and build a safer and healthier environment for youth. In addition, the DARE program is offered in sixth grade in the middle school.

1. Competitive Contracts

Lakewood School District has implemented competitive contracting for transportation, food service, custodial/maintenance and security services. These contracts have saved the district an estimated \$12 million since 1992.

2. Health Benefit Cost Control

Lakewood School District has controlled health benefit and leave costs through utilization of a form of self-insurance, coverage restrictions, the bidding of coverage every few years, and reduction in accumulated leave payout liability.

3. Risk Management

Employment of a Safety Compliance Officer to administer a comprehensive safety program and enhance liability protection for the district serves to limit the school district's loss experience and the resultant increase in insurance costs.

4. Special Education Services

The Lakewood School District has made the decision to return special education students to the district to the greatest extent possible. This decision is expected to save an estimated \$753,618 from the 1991-92 school year through the 1995-96 school year.

5. Administrative Reorganization

Reorganization of administrative functions has resulted in the reduction of 14 positions since the 1992-93 school year. The impact on staff was minimized because the deleted positions were vacated through attrition and/or reassignment. A notable operational result of the reorganization was an improvement in the articulation of the K-12 curriculum with the expansion of the curriculum subject area directors' responsibilities to include elementary as well as High School grades.

6. Alternative Education

Lakewood School District has established an alternate education program designed to offer continued schooling to disaffected high school students who might not otherwise graduate. The program is particularly commendable for its considerable use of volunteers and donations in support of the construction of the new building.

MILLVILLE CITY BOE

Cooperative Purchasing

Millville is commended for taking an active role in participating in various purchasing cooperatives. The district participates in the Cumberland County Educational Cooperative for specific food, transportation, drug and alcohol and environmental services and with Pittsgrove Township for the purchase of copy paper. In turn, it takes the lead in purchasing custodial supplies, medical supplies and copy paper for a consortium of surrounding elementary school districts including the Townships of Woodbine, Lawrence, Maurice River, Downe, Commercial and Deerfield and copy paper for the

City of Millville. Studies have shown that public entities can gain greater output from purchasing dollars by consolidating similar needs to create volume purchasing. Through participation in larger cooperatives and leadership in passing those savings on to smaller surrounding districts, Millville has created a model that could be emulated in other school districts throughout the State of New Jersey.

Building Trades Program

At Millville Senior High school, a three year Building Trades Program is offered that affords students the opportunity to learn the concepts of housing design, engineering, planning and permitting as well as hands on building trade experience. In the past 30 years the students in this program have constructed over 30 houses, an athletic storage building at the Senior High School, and the district's Early Childhood building.

The district buys property that is subdivided into building lots. The students select a housing design from existing catalogues (just as a potential homebuyer would do), and they participate in all aspects of planning, material purchasing, sub-contracting and constructing a 1,600-1,900 square foot house. During the first year of construction the students do the framing and exterior work, and during the second year interior finishes are completed. The district competitively bids any work that requires licensed trades. Upon completion, the houses are sold at a competitive auction and the money is placed in the general fund to be used to support the program. During the past year, the American Builders' Association certified the program's curriculum.

The district is commended for this outstanding program. It is an example of a program that provides students with practical experience and economic opportunity for the future, and it is one that could be replicated by other school districts in the state.

The Jason Project

This program enables elementary school students to communicate, through technology, with some of the best scientists in the country and to receive input on topics related to their areas of expertise. Through E-mail and satellite down links students are able to become involved in projects ranging from ocean exploration to visiting the Amazon Rainforest. As a result of their involvement in this project, a teacher and students were invited to testify before a congressional committee on technology and its applications in schools. The Jason Project, which is a cooperative effort with the National Geographic Society, is an exemplary program which excites students to learn. The team commends the school district for providing this opportunity for its students.

MONTVILLE BOE

Budget Impact Committee

In May, 1995, the Board of Education established a Budget Impact Committee (BIC) to examine the district budget with the goal of identifying practices that will result in greater efficiency in the school district operations and expenses. The ad hoc committee was comprised of the board president, two board members, the superintendent, the business

administrator and four members of the community who had expertise in business finance and/or procurement of services.

This "budget buster" group set an agenda of meeting monthly or more often as necessary to review the school district budget for savings areas and to suggest fiscal policy and procedures similar to those employed in the private sector which would bring savings to the community through efficient spending practices and programs. The BIC decided to focus their efforts during the first year of operation on three areas of high cost. These were health benefits, transportation and privatization.

School District Credit Card

A new program was initiated in the Spring, 1996 with the issuing of a Montville Township Schools Visa Gold Credit Card through the local branch of Metropolitan State Bank. Proceeds of school district return are dedicated to fund technology improvements in the school district. The bank will pay the costs of administering the cards and a percentage of the net profit received on income generated by use of the Gold Visa Card issued under this program. It is anticipated the district could earn approximately \$20,000 in the first year under this program.

Facility Improvement Advisory Committee

Another example of open community citizen involvement and participation in the district is the Robert R. Lazar Middle School Facility Improvement Advisory Committee. The voters of Montville approved a \$6.22 million referendum for the renovation and expansion of the Robert R. Lazar Middle School in September 1995. A committee of citizen volunteers was formed to advise district personnel, the project architects and board of education about construction and efficiencies that might be realized. The committee members brought varied and valuable expertise and experience to the facility improvement project. An advocate for the disabled, an architect, a construction project manager, a utilities authority director, a high school student, an engineer, the local construction official and a technology expert are illustrative of the backgrounds of the members. In addition, the local school parent organizations provided input and referendum support.

Educational Community Involvement

There are many other examples of total educational community involvement in school activities, projects, budget planning, governance and management. The district and individual schools are open to all groups and individuals in various school district functions and operations. Site based management is stressed and works with varying degrees of success. Some examples of this involvement include the following:

- **Technology Advisory Committee** This committee of community volunteers with technology expertise meets periodically during the year with the supervisor of technology. The committee advises district administrators on productive and efficient use of technology applications in the educational and operational programs.
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- **Citizens Advisory Committee for Communications** Citizen volunteers meet three times a year with the superintendent to discuss issues, topics of concern regarding the

operation of the schools, and the effectiveness of the district communication with the public. High school students are members of the committee.

- **Presidents' Council** The presidents of the seven parent/teacher organizations meet monthly with the superintendent of schools to discuss school district operations, to coordinate resources, conduct joint fund raising efforts, plan activities promoting home and school cooperation and be a sounding board for school initiatives and concerns.
- **Student Representatives to the School Board** Two high school students serve as representatives of their peers at all public board of education meetings. The students participate in the discussions and have a special portion of the agenda to provide a report during the meetings.
- **High School Ad Hoc Committee(s)** Ad hoc committees open to participation of students, faculty, staff, parents and community meet on various topics during the year as part of Montville Township High Schools' planning strategies under their site based management plan. Topics have included community service activities and alternative assessment of students.
- **Other community and staff input and involvement activities** include the Administrative Faculty Advisory Committee made up of the leadership of various school staff groups, Steering Committee with MTEA (teachers' association) representatives and suggestion boxes place at the Township Library and Municipal Building.

Parent/School Organizations

Various forms of parent/school organizations exist in the Montville schools. Whether they be the more formal affiliated national PTA or local home and school associations, they serve the singular purpose of betterment of their schools for children. In addition to the presidents' council above, each individual school organization takes on a supportive role in close cooperation with the principals and their staffs. They provide volunteers throughout the school program as needed to assist in the smooth operation of the schools. They provide a once a week hot lunch program in the elementary schools where there is not a national school lunch program and the children "brown bag" their lunches daily. They also conduct fund raisers for small and major projects for school improvement. For example: they have funded school assembly programs and field trips; they have made purchases of computer hardware and software and other technology items; they have constructed new playgrounds at considerable expense at the elementary schools over the past several years; they have purchased display cases in the rotunda of the high school; and they have provided scholarships to graduating seniors. Another project that supports the curricular program of the schools is the book publishing centers the parent organizations have established at the schools. Children write original story books that are then prepared with hard cover copies by the publishing centers. Children then have keepsakes of their writings of which they are proud and often copies are prepared and

placed in the school libraries. It is said that these books are often among those most highly read and circulated by the other students.

Cooperation with Local Municipal Government

A very important area of public relations is the relationship with the local governing body. The governing boards, board of education and township committee, work together meeting periodically to discuss issues of mutual concern. The executive leaders, the superintendent and township administrator (as well as the school business administrator), share a mutual respect and communicate on issues as well. Results of these cooperative

Montville Extended Day Learning Center Program (MEDLC)

The MEDLC program operates in all five elementary schools of the district offering school-based enrichment and child care services before and after school beginning at 7:00 AM and continuing after school until 6:00 PM. The program originated in the Hilldale School and with its success, expanded to the other buildings. It is supported exclusively by fees paid by the parents (currently \$2.50/hour) of program participants. It is available to parents on days of emergency school closings during the school year as well as during vacation periods.

Chinese School

Typically, the schools are shared with the community for various recreation and other program activities. Most of these are non-revenue generating with most participants being community members. In addition, however, the district rents the entire high school to the Northern Chinese Association each Sunday for 34 weeks per year at a fee of \$524 per week to operate their **Chinese School**. Additional fees are charged for use of the auditorium for special occasions. The organization pays additionally for three custodians at overtime rates and for any damage they may cause. This generates revenue for the district of over \$20,000 per year and promotes positive relations with this growing and influential segment of the community.

Over 550 students, of which 30% are from Montville, participate in the Chinese School. Others come from other North Jersey communities and from parts of New York. The school has been in operation in the Montville schools for over ten years. It offers a wide variety of programs centered on the Chinese language, culture and studies. With the number of program and course offerings provided by this school, it reduces the programs that may have been required in the regular public school program. The Chinese people in Montville Township have contributed much to the community in the way of resources and participation in community fund raisers for the schools, new library, recreation, and special events.

Business Office Practices

The business office has undertaken several measures in their operations that are cost savings initiatives. Some are as follows:

Insurance Cost saving elements have been negotiated with the district's insurance broker in the area of health benefits. They include admission review, mandatory second surgical

opinion and increased deductible. Premiums have been reduced. Staff are surveyed to ascertain current number of dependents. Worker's compensation is tracked and monitored resulting in an excellent program. A safety officer available to the district has resulted in 20-25 percent discount off premiums. The district is responsible for all COBRA collections resulting in savings of \$1,700 in administrative fees.

The board received a \$410,000 health benefits rebate from their carrier for overpayment. These funds were used in the new budget calculation to replenish a depleting surplus.

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Technology is being introduced to business operations resulting in more efficient operations and monitoring of functions such as purchasing, investing and internal controls. It is planned to expand networking to all buildings to improve efficiencies with purchasing, e-mail and training.

Shared Services The district utilizes the services of the Morris County Educational Services Commission (MCESCOM) for shared services in the area of transportation, non-public, health and safety, special education and purchasing. These costs have proven to be a savings to the schools over the years.

Energy The district has completed its first year of participation in the Honeywell energy conservation service program. All buildings' heating systems have alarms in case of failure. Results of savings are not yet known.

Internal Controls In trying to ensure internal controls, the office came up with a concept that could be replicated by other schools and governmental agencies. Last year, the public schools accountant was given a goal by the business administrator to have the best audit ever. As a result, they came up with the idea of having a pre-audit. The idea was to correct the problems found in previous audits and impede any new problems from arising. Because of his background in accounting and internal controls, he was able to do some testing of procedures (purchasing, cash collections, etc.) to ensure that no problems existed. If a problem was found, a solution was derived to ensure that correct procedures were in place. This pre-audit is planned to continue into future years.

High School Cost Savings Initiatives

The Montville Township High School has initiated several cost savings measures recently. These include computerizing student scheduling for a savings of \$17,000 per year and instituting new policies for 1996/97 in the driver education program whereby students will pay for non-mandated behind-the-wheel training and in student contribution to payment of certain field trip costs. The year book is now done via in-house desktop publishing saving dollars vs. total outside professional production. In 1994/95 Montville Township High School joined an interactive television group that connects them with other area high schools and to various networking sites over a Bell Atlantic fiber optic cable system. This curricular effort has tremendous possibilities of cost savings with expanded course offerings and low enrollment programs shared with the other participating districts.

Move Up Day

The Move Up Day program in the Montville schools enables students to experience a day near the end of the year at the next grade level to which they will be promoted. The review team observed this activity at the high school where middle school students from the eighth grade experienced a day at their new school for next year. They were given a thorough orientation to the high school facility and operation. They experienced a typical day's schedule and had the opportunity to meet some of their teachers and to interact with high school students. Grade five students were provided with a like experience at the middle school. This Move Up Day program helps to alleviate fears of students as they think of moving on to the next level. It also provides enough familiarity with their new school to effect a smooth transition and school opening in September.

NEW BRUNSWICK

The New Brunswick school district has an outstanding record of securing cost effective services for students through partnerships and collaborative efforts with community and business associations. One of the key resources in that effort is New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT), which is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to developing public/private networks of agencies, institutions and volunteer organizations. NBT provides a comprehensive, integrated means of identifying critical community needs and assuring that human and social issues are addressed. The agency serves as a catalyst and facilitator in developing and supporting programs to improve the quality of life in the community. According to the Center for Public Interest Polling, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers, NBT had citizen approval of 81% in a 1996 survey.

Project 2000

Sponsored by the Civic League of Greater New Brunswick, Project 2000 is a company-based volunteer program that encourages executive employees to be engaged as teachers' assistants in elementary school classrooms for one-half day per week. The program is based upon the concept that positive attitudes toward the school environment and academic achievement in inner-city male students can be nurtured early in their school experience through positive male-role models.

The project began in 1991 as a primary school program, with 27 male volunteers. In June, 1997, the program ended for summer recess with a total of 56 male volunteers serving in 39 classrooms in three elementary schools. In 1994, Project 2000 was expanded by the establishment of a Middle School Development Program with 22 additional corporate volunteers, who spend two half days per month serving as role models and mentors for young female and male adolescents. Emphasis has been placed on female volunteers to assist students of that gender in self-esteem, decision-making, and coping skills. After three years of operation, 69 volunteers served 20 middle grade (5-8) classrooms with 340 students in four elementary schools. It is apparent that the prorated salaries of corporate volunteers exceed \$350,000 in donated services per year.

Health Professions Scholars Program

The Health Professions Scholars Program (HPSP) is a partnership between the school district and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, the core teaching hospital of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. The HPSP is designed to stimulate interest in health professions and to motivate talented urban students to remain in school and plan for education in a health professions career. About 25 students in grade eight are admitted to the highly competitive program each year and 100 or more students participate each year in grades 8-12. HPSP provides monthly learning activities at the hospital, mentoring from health care professionals, field trips, CPR training, summer employment, and advanced placement study opportunities in grade 12 in math and science at Rutgers, the State University, and Middlesex County College. The HPSP program costs about \$45,000 to \$50,000 per year, with the district contributing about 10% of that amount.

Dance Power

Dance Power was created nine years ago by funding by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. All third grade students in the district are eligible to audition in Dance Power each fall and are required to reapply annually for scholarship renewal. Dance Power is a special arts enrichment program, which offers students opportunities to increase their vocabulary, to expand their musical repertoire, and to strengthen their physical movement and dance technique. Year one students receive dancewear and free training in the studios of the American Repertory Ballet in New Brunswick and the school district provides transportation. A trip to see “The Nutcracker” and a performance opportunity in the spring provide students with a well-rounded introduction to dance. For those who wish to continue their training, individual student scholarships, which are offered based on need and available resources, are valued at \$400 each. Today, about 100 students participate annually in Dance Power, which is funded by corporate donations of about \$25,000 and a district contribution of \$10,000 annually.

Engineering

Raritan Introduction of Minorities to Engineering (RIME) is a local chapter of a national organization, which works closely with the district to develop programs for selected students, beginning with the seventh grade and continuing through high school. These programs are designed to stimulate interest and motivate students to pursue engineering careers. The purpose of RIME is to design, implement and support adjunct programs to increase the number of minorities entering the engineering professions. The district provides a counselor in grade 7 to participate in the early identification of talented and interested students. RIME has been in operation for 15 or more years, with support from several local corporations, which provide \$1500 to \$2500 each and the Rutgers School of Engineering. Currently about 40 high school and 20 eighth grade students participate in the program. An average of two \$1500 scholarships is awarded each year.

School-Based Youth Services

The New Brunswick School Based Youth Services Program, designed to assist students to successfully finish school, is co-sponsored by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey - University Behavioral Health Care, New Brunswick

Tomorrow, and the school district. Services offered to students in grades K-12 and their families include:

- **Counseling** - Supportive counseling sessions for individuals, groups and family members;
- **Health care** - Comprehensive health services and referrals;
- **Teen parenting services** - Provides child care assistance for full-time students, as well as counseling and after school parenting classes; and
- **Recreation** - A variety of social, cultural and educational activities to provide balance and a positive image for participants.

The program is funded by a NJ Department of Human Services grant, a district contribution and a UMDNJ staff salaries contribution.

Professional Development School

A major initiative began in 1992 when the Rutgers Graduate School of Education (GSE) and the New Brunswick School District began cooperative planning efforts to develop a Professional Development School (PDS). An agreement was reached to create a model school that would optimize teachers' professional development both to prepare future teachers and to support practicing teachers. Lincoln School, an elementary school with grades K-8 and special education classes, formally opened as a PDS in September, 1995. The PDS goal is to provide innovative, exemplary programs in literacy, mathematics, science and technology through teacher professional development. Pre-service and in-service experiences for GSE students and collaborative research and development activities between GSE faculty and district faculty take place at the school. Projects have included teacher involvement in classroom management, early literacy, counseling, mathematics education and technology. The National Science Foundation-supported State Systemic Initiative has designated the PDS as a model school for New Jersey and the nation. The National Education Association has also listed the PDS as a model school in their sharing network.

Hire Attire Boutique

The Adult Learning Center serves an important function by providing a wide variety of relatively inexpensive educational programs for both immigrants and native high school dropouts. An outstanding activity at the learning center is the Hire Attire Boutique, which is an alternative work experience program, also providing a place where students can obtain appropriate donated and attractive clothing to wear for going out into the world of work.

Groups with regular contact and cooperation with the school district include:

- New Brunswick Tomorrow
- Johnson & Johnson
- Puerto Rican Action Board
- Greater New Brunswick Day Care Council
- Rutgers, The State University
- Rutgers Mental Health
- New Brunswick Police Department

- New Brunswick Schools Youth Services
- Civic League of Greater New Brunswick
- University of Medicine & Denistry(UMDNJ)
- Middlesex County College
-

The district is commended for establishing linkages with many community, private and state organizations to assist in providing New Brunswick students with effective school programs. This is, by far, the greatest example of a district's partnership with, and utilization of, community resources, both public and private, that LGBR has seen thus far. It is a credit not only to the district, but also to the many organizations and individuals involved in providing services to the city's children and youth.

OCEAN CITY BOE

Extension Program

The primary goal of the Ocean City Extension Program is to provide a non-traditional educational opportunity, vocational direction and a career pathway to students who have not been successful in the regular high school environment. The program follows the Ocean City High School calendar and offers a modified, more individualized curriculum aimed at increasing basic skills achievement. A proficiency-based instructional strategy allows each student to work at his/her own pace following the Ocean City High School curriculum and graduation requirements along with additional credits earned through CO-OP work experiences. Students receive individualized professional support, e.g., counseling and teacher encouragement, aimed at helping them to receive state endorsed high school diplomas and possibly go on in their educational endeavors or into careers. The school day is four hours long, beginning at 2:00 p.m. In addition to content area instruction, students receive support services as needed. Career counseling, drug and alcohol counseling, individual and group counseling and social services are provided. Students enter the program through a referral process monitored by the Ocean City High School Pupil Assistance Committee (PAC). Students are referred by teachers, guidance counselors, PAC, Child Study Team (CST) members, administrators and parents. Students are commonly identified and referred to the program as candidates based on such criteria as:

- risk of failing or dropping out of school;
- need for a non-traditional educational schedule;
- poor attendance record;
- involvement with chemical substances;
- involvement with the juvenile justice system;
- inability to follow or conform to traditional school rules and policies; and
- negative experiences in relation to such things as the traditional school setting, traditional methods of instruction and learning, etc.

“Partners in Distance Learning” Program

Ocean City is presently participating in this program which is part of a countywide consortium established in 1995. The district is able to share costs for selective services

with other members of the consortium, thereby reducing costs to the district. Examples of how this program does or has the potential to promote savings for the district include the following:

- The district's number of individual field trips can be reduced via "Electronic Trips."
- The curriculum can be expanded by adding and sharing with other districts specific courses that an individual school system might be less likely to offer.
- Teacher training and development workshops can be offered to several districts simultaneously.
- A broader selection of AP courses can be offered and shared by several districts via teleconferencing.
- Round table and small group discussions can be held for various inter-district groups.
- Small group counseling services can be offered to students, staff, etc. from several districts via teleconferencing.
- Common directions can be offered countywide for various state level and standardized test taking.
- Coverage of national level events can be offered to districts throughout the county. It should be noted that distance learning offers a lot of potential for future expansion and Ocean City, as well as the other participating districts, should be encouraged to explore new ways of utilizing this resource.

OLD BRIDGE BOE

Affirmative Action Presentation: The Old Bridge School District plans to use a live television broadcast to present information to staff about the district's affirmative action program. This will take place during the first day of orientation at the beginning of each school year. The high school television studio will be used as the telecast source. The program will identify staff responsible for affirmative action, explain the program procedures, and respond to questions from teachers in the studio audience. This is an efficient way to respond to an information requirement-reaching all staff, in an interesting way, while providing consistent information. A tape of the session can be used to inform personnel hired later in the year, as well as for community, parent, and student use. This time-saving device could also be replicated by districts that do not have television studios through cooperation with community cable services.

The Cooperative Learning Project: The Cooperative Satellite Learning Project (CSLP) is a partnership through which Allied Signals Technical Services Corporation and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) work with schools nationwide. Old Bridge High School is one of two New Jersey schools, and one of nine schools nationwide, to offer this program. The objective of CSLP is to encourage students to pursue careers in science, engineering, mathematics, and the space industry. Old Bridge High School has been involved with CSLP since 1995. The program began as an after school club. Two years later the board of education approved CSLP as a five credit elective course. Currently, the high school offers two sections of the course. The course is designed as a cooperative learning experience through a variety of projects. The textbook is a training manual used by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory for new employees. NASA

has allowed CSLP to "adopt" the Advanced Composition Explorer (ACE) satellite. CSLP students design, construct, launch, and test satellites. Old Bridge students are researching the next NASA satellite, the Microwave Anisotropy Probe, which is being built at the Goddard Space Flight Center. The instrument package is being developed and built at Princeton University. A Princeton astrophysicist visits the classroom regularly to discuss the project. Students give CSLP presentations to the general public and other schools in the district. A monthly newsletter provides information about the class and program. CSLP students have two annual field trips: one to the Goddard Space Flight center in Greenbelt, Maryland, the other a CSLP conference. Scientists and engineers come to the district four to six times a year to give lectures and answer questions.

Communications Initiatives: The board of education and the superintendent have made communications with all parts of the community a priority. Among these efforts are monthly meetings between the superintendent and PTA presidents, evening forums in the schools to answer questions and hear issues, a monthly meeting by the superintendent and a community advisory committee, a variety of publications, televised regular monthly board of education meetings, an e-mail site which can be used to directly ask questions of the superintendent, and a web site. Because public education is expensive, information concerning these costs is vital to public understanding of the needs and learning goals of the community's schools.

Middle School Activities Programs: Each of the district's two middle schools has a program to motivate increased student participation in after school activities. A wide variety of sports and clubs is offered. Many of the activities derive from staff interests and are conducted on a voluntary basis. This helps ensure that the program activities expand the traditional menu of sports and clubs. Participating students receive points for their involvement in the activities. These points can be accumulated to earn a field trip and recognition breakfasts sponsored by the school PTAs.

Middle School Planetaria: The Old Bridge School District has a planetarium in each of its two middle schools. These creative facilities enhance the curriculum for students. At the same time, the planetaria afford fascinating learning opportunities for students from the district's other schools, who travel to the middle schools for special programs. The community is also able to learn about science, astronomy, and many other aspects of life through these unique facilities. The staff who serve the planetaria are well trained and enthusiastic about their fine learning spaces and their many programs.

Peer Leadership Program:

The district employs middle school training activities in conflict resolution and peer mediation. Student volunteers participating in these activities learn important leadership skills, while helping to maintain a positive school environment. This program enables the district to work with municipal authorities and the Old Bridge Municipal Alliance.

Computer Purchases

Computer equipment is purchased directly from the manufacturer. The district takes advantage of price breaks that occur mid-year due to new product offerings. In doing this, the district receives up to 12.5% discounts and saved an estimated \$1,600 during the 1996-97 school year.

Group Long Distance Rates

The district recently joined with 26 other school districts to purchase toll call and long distance service through the Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission (MOESC). The Commission has entered into an agreement with a vendor to provide these services from April 1, 1998 to March 31, 1999. Based on FY '97 expenses, a 10% cost reduction is projected resulting in a \$500 annual savings.

Technology Training

Training initiatives have been arranged for administrative and office staff free of charge in cooperation with the Manasquan School District.

Authors' Corner

The school librarian has created an authors' corner in the school library. This unique location contains letters from children's authors and illustrators urging students to read, providing information about authoring and illustrating, and encouraging students to persevere in school. Often samples of art work or author's photos accompany the letters. This project has received a "Best Practices" award from the New Jersey State Department of Education. Efforts by dedicated staff members have assembled a fine motivational area for the students. Clearly, this is a labor of love and has obtained items for the children of Sea Girt that could not be purchased commercially.

Sea Girt Foundation

The district has established a Sea Girt School Foundation. This is a forward looking move that provides the district with a mechanism to receive private donations.

Public/Private Partnership

A cooperative relationship with a computer technology consulting firm has been established. This arrangement has resulted in the loan of essential equipment, free of charge, assistance in developing an excellent technology plan, and other no cost consulting services. The relationship appears likely to be on going and will serve the children, and save money for the taxpayers, for years to come. The equipment on loan has an estimated value of \$8,000.

Community Support

One advantage of a small, close-knit school district is the opportunity for parent and community involvement. Many of those with whom LGBR spoke regarding the Sea Girt school described the situation as "familial" and welcomed the opportunity to participate in a variety of school projects. The Parent Teacher Organization works hard to provide additional resources for the learning program. Its donations include: \$50 to each teacher for classroom improvements, computers, kindergarten blocks, one half the cost of the

school sound system, a shape cutter, playground equipment, a video camera, and a 35 mm camera. The Booster Club has donated new basketball and baseball scoreboards, team uniforms for baseball, basketball, softball, and cheerleaders, championship jackets, the sports awards pasta dinner, and an air pump. The scoreboards alone are worth \$7,000. The P.T.O. and the Booster Club provide significant resources that permit district programs and student activities to continue without further burden on local tax payers.

Child Study Team Services

The Sea Girt Board of Education receives Child Study Team (CST) services from the Manasquan School District through an interlocal agreement. The CST is composed of a psychologist, a social worker, and a learning disabilities teacher consultant. According to the agreement, the team is required to spend one half day per week in the district. The CST serves the district's elementary school students as well as those who continue on to Manasquan High School. Starting services with the elementary students provides a continuity of services. The Sea Girt school district receives federal grant funding through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B (IDEA-B). Basic Flow-Through Funds are jointly applied for with the Manasquan School District. Manasquan receives the funds directly and applies Sea Girt's portion against its obligation contracted through the Child Study Team agreement.

PASCACK REGIONAL

Region II - Special Education

For a number of years all public school districts in Bergen County were divided into regions for the purpose of sharing services associated with the cost of providing classified students with special education services. These services included, but were not limited to, self-contained classes, transportation, occupational and physical therapy, speech correction, teacher supervision and staff development. In Region II, these services were provided through the district's association with the Region II Council for Special Education. The annual regional administrative costs associated with providing these services during the 1995-96 school year were approximately \$360,000. Through an extensive review of the administrative costs associated with providing these services, a new plan was developed wherein the Pascack Valley Regional District would become the Local Education Agency (LEA) and, through a series of joint purchase

Special Education Services - Emotionally Disturbed Class for High School Students

During the past several years, out-of-district tuition costs have skyrocketed. Tuition alone often costs the district two to three times its per pupil expenditure, and transportation adds significantly to these expenditures. In many cases, because of their disruptive behavior, districts seek alternate settings for these students. They are often classified as emotionally disturbed, or ED. During the 1996-97 school year, the district's special services department conducted a review of existing ED programs housed in regular comprehensive high schools. This review led to the establishment of a plan to open a district ED class at Pascack Hills High School in September, 1997. The structure and organization of this class was based on educational research validating each instructional

and related service component. Of the six students who are currently in this program, some have been returned to the district from out-of-district placements; others are part of the program in lieu of out-of-district placements; and others have come to this district as tuition students from neighboring communities. The cost of establishing this class was approximately \$80,000 and the total net savings \$100,000.

Phasing Technology Plan

During the 1993-94 school year, the district developed and implemented its first-ever, Five Phase Technology Plan. By phasing this plan over a number of years, costs of technology are never amortized for a period greater than the useful life of the hardware or software. Capacity for instructional technology grows as specific uses are identified and become an integral part of the instructional program. A major component of the Technology Plan was for the training of staff throughout the school district. As the Plan moved from one phase to another, older equipment was reallocated to areas of the instructional program where it could be used appropriately. Newer equipment was allocated to areas where more sophisticated use was required. Although service contracts were initially a part of the plan, a technology supervisor and computer coordinator have been able to service hardware and software and to address problems as they developed. By hiring students at minimum wage during the summer, setup costs have been minimized and professional skills have been targeted to more sophisticated areas. Implementation of the plan established early linkages with the Bergen Electronic Library System and the Bergen County Cooperative Library System for sharing services and materials among member high schools.

Overtime Management Plan

During the 1994-95 school year, the district spent approximately \$64,956 in unregulated overtime costs. During the 1995-96 school year, a plan was developed wherein each building principal was asked to monitor all overtime costs and to achieve a specific target dollar amount. If the target was achieved, any under-spent funds could be used to complete a specific building maintenance project. During the 1995-96 school year, about \$17, 295 was saved from the prior year; during the 1996-97 school year, about \$45,356 was saved from the indexed year. The district also has included in the negotiated support contract, provisions for custodians to work a 40-hour week, either Monday through Friday or, Tuesday through Saturday, in order to reduce overtime costs.

Health Insurance Fund

As founding members and part of the feasibility study that resulted in the formation of the first New Jersey School Health Insurance Fund for school districts, Pascack Valley Regional School District played a critical role in the establishment of the North Jersey Health Insurance Fund. As the formation of the HIF was underway, the board was negotiating with the teachers' association for a successor contract. An agreement was reached between the board and association to work cooperatively in the migration of the district's health coverage contract from the New Jersey State Health Benefits Program to the North Jersey Health Insurance Fund. A joint committee was established to ensure a smooth transition; complaints and concerns were dealt with expeditiously. The first year

savings are reported as \$181,518. Recently, the board has identified a new preferred provider organization (PPO) option known as the Pascack Select Plan, which will be presented at negotiations as the board's basic coverage plan for all district employees. The Pascack Plan achieves specific financial economies when compared to the traditional plan.

Class Size Policy

During the 1994-95 school year, the board of education adopted its first class size policy. The policy established guidelines for all regular education classes within the district and strategies to address specific situations where class sizes fell below or above these guidelines. Further, the board established annual budget parameters to align existing class size averages with the newly established class size policy. Class size alignments would be achieved through attrition, where possible, and through reduction in force, if necessary. The application of this policy has been of value to the board in the development of the annual school budget. Since the 1994-95 school year, the district class size actual average has changed from about 19 to 21 students. Consequently, the number of teachers employed by the school district has been reduced with an estimated savings of \$432,000.

Reorganization-Supervision of Instruction

During the past four years, the district has been migrating from a building-based supervisory model to a district-based organizational scheme. District positions have been established for supervision of guidance, special education, mathematics, technology and science while maintaining an existing district position in physical education, health, and driver education. Included in this reorganization was the reassignment of the prior District Administrative Supervisor of Pupil Services to a district supervisory function. Annual savings are estimated as \$190,000.

Special Education - IEP Writer 2000

Three years ago a consortium of districts associated with Region II - Special Education undertook the task of developing a comprehensive software package to maintain all special education data, and to generate all documents associated with classification, annual review, individual education programs and three-year updates. The utilization of this software has improved the efficiency of each special education office in the region, and permitted existing personnel the time necessary to complete tasks associated with the former Pascack Valley Council for Special Education. Further, the districts involved have initiated the steps necessary to market this software program in New Jersey and across the United States. Revenue from these sales will not only be used to underwrite the costs associated with revisions of this program, but also offset the costs associated with the operation of Special Education-Region II.

Natural Gas Purchases

Pascack Regional District utilizes a consultant to make natural gas purchases on its behalf at about a 19% savings over the utility's rates. There currently is legislation to create this type of marketplace for electricity purchases with less regulation and reduced cost. The regional district was an innovator in this area and saved over \$23,000 in 1996-97. **It is**

obvious from each of these examples of best practices that the Pascack Valley Regional School District has repeatedly shown its ability to seek out and implement creative, cost efficient solutions to the business of education. The team applauds these efforts and urges other school districts to utilize the same level of foresight and determination shown by this district to effect cost efficiencies.

PRINCETON REGIONAL BOE

Technology

The district technology coordinator has been instrumental in the purchase and installation of the fiber optic cable for the district network in a very cost-effective manner. The district network includes six schools and central office, the two municipal complexes, the learning center, the public library and the senior center. The district network is connected to the Princeton University network, which provides Internet access, and to MercerNet countywide distance learning/data network. The LGBR team was favorably impressed with the technical knowledge, leadership skill in utilizing outside resources and resulting hardware and software procured by the technology coordinator.

Facilities Management

The district facilities program integrates good building management practices with the educational goals of each school facility and the district. The director has developed a business plan that includes an automated work order process that equitably allocates and accounts for the district's manpower and material resources. These practices also help protect the health and safety of students and staff. In schools, all custodial and maintenance staff (including management) wear uniforms that are easily recognized by students, staff and parents. Cleaning "systems" (chemicals and equipment) are standardized and efficient and include methods that are in compliance with indoor air quality guidelines. There are regular monthly roundtable meetings for all school custodial supervisors where new initiatives and common problems are introduced and discussed. There is also an aggressive playground safety and inspection program. Two specific items deserve special mention. The first is a district initiative. The district's web site includes "Right to Know" data sheets for all chemicals used in the district. The list is inclusive, from cleaning supplies to chemistry class experiments. This provides ready and immediate access to statutory information by school medical staff, as well as local or regional medical personnel in case of an emergency.

The second is the "Spic and Span Award," given each month to the cleanest classroom(s) by the custodial supervisor at the Littlebrook School. The custodian rewards the class with cookies or snacks that he personally provides. Although a small item, it is identified as a best practice because the custodian has introduced students to the concept of cooperative participation in a common goal ("we want cookies"), in the context of "shared savings" at a micro level. If the room is left cleaner, the custodians have more time to work on other priorities. It also demonstrates a school wide sense of cooperation and caring. As in all successful "joint ventures", everybody wins.

Partnerships with the Private Sector

The district is part of a four-district consortium with Bristol-Myers/Squibb (BMS). BMS provides scientists to work with classroom teachers and has pledged over \$150,000 over five years to support an inquiry-based, hands-on, K-8 science program. Local merchants support special events with donations of goods and services, thus helping to defray district expenses.

- Bloomberg Communications provides 50 “Power-Lunch Readers” who volunteer to read with elementary pupils once per week. The *Everybody Wins Foundation* coordinates the effort.
- Princeton Young Achievers, an after-school literacy-tutoring and homework-help program, has an advisory board that annually raises \$30,000 to \$60,000 to support the program’s activities. Princeton High School’s Environ Mentors Program, in its fifth year, matches students to adults to create environmental projects, which the high school students present to classes in elementary or middle schools. More than a dozen local science, technology and environmental firms provide released time for their employees to participate in this project that is open to all, but affirmatively works with minority students.

Engaging Community Members

A coordinator of volunteers at Princeton High School matches over 100 community members (retired teachers, university students and professors, business people, and homemakers) with students who need temporary or ongoing assistance with their academic studies. Another volunteer coordinator, who is funded by a grant from the *America Reads Challenge*, links community members and middle and high school students in one-on-one tutoring relationships with elementary school students, particularly in grades K - 3, in reading-support activities. The grant also provides for ongoing training of volunteer tutors. As a result of the elimination of library-assistant positions from the budget several years ago, each school Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) annually organizes a substantial cadre of parent volunteers to assist with the labor-intensive tasks necessary for the library to function effectively. One elementary school principal estimates, on average, about 120 hours per week by community and PTO volunteers, who donate their time and talents to help in the classroom, library, computer laboratory, playground and cafeteria. Based on a non-certified instructional aide’s base hourly wage of \$9.25, the savings to the district for volunteers in one school would total about \$45,000 annually.

Seniors as Educational Partners

Community Park and Littlebrook Schools, in collaboration with the Senior Resource Center, engage over 100 seniors in activities such as reading to and/or with students. The program, *Grandparents, Grandpartners*, began three years ago with the support of the Princeton Education Foundation. Next year, the program is expected to expand to Johnson Park School. At John Witherspoon Middle School, seniors (many current or former lawyers) and eighth graders challenge each other’s views on governmental issues during the Jefferson Debates, which supplement the civics focus of the social studies curriculum.

Parent Involvement

- Each school has a PTO, whose members provide ongoing programmatic and financial support, such as the following examples:
- Community Park School: arts residencies and after-school clubs.
- Johnson Park School: school-wide art projects and creation of outdoor-learning opportunities.
- Littlebook School: development of an environmental trail based on children's literature and partial sponsorship of a fifth-grade overnight trip to Gettysburg.
- Riverside School: creation of theme gardens and development of school-wide pupil broadcasts.
- John Witherspoon Middle School: support for grade-level environmental trip, Washington, DC trip and funding of teachers' curricular initiatives.
- Princeton High School: support of a recycling program with containers and sponsorship of a post-prom party to ensure students' safety and supervision.
- PTOs provide mini-grants to classroom teachers to enhance their educational programs.

RIVERTON BOE

The district has been the recipient of a federal Technology Literacy Challenge Fund grant in the amount of \$94,096. This competitive grant enabled the district to establish a website, www.riverton.k12.nj.us. On the website the Riverton Project was created. The project has historical and current information about the Victorian Riverton town. The information is in the form of a timeline created by the then 5th grade class. Other classes in the school gathered information and created projects to place on the timeline. Each year it is anticipated that classes will add to and improve on the website.

Funds (\$28,536) from the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund were also used to equip the Technology Laboratory with 24 Pentium computers. Students are given the opportunity in the laboratory to refine their research abilities using a variety of software sources and the Internet. They apply their knowledge when producing projects assigned by classroom and subject area teachers. Projects are presented using PowerPoint, MS Word and MS Access. Through agreement with the Palmyra School District, Riverton has arranged for eligible eighth grade students to take an Algebra 1 Mathematics course at Palmyra High School. The use of creative scheduling allows the students to participate at the beginning of the day and return to school without losing valuable instructional time.

The district has secured a number of smaller grants enabling it to participate in programs that have proved beneficial to the school and community. Through the Burlington County Human Services Commission, the Riverton School has been able to initiate a peer mediation/conflict resolution program.

Each spring fourth grade students are trained in the program strategies through group activities, direct instruction and role-play. Burlington County also sponsored the Child Assault Prevention (CAP) Program, a preventative tool aimed at supporting the safety and well-being of students. The program involves parental, staff and student training and instructs and supports children in their rights to be safe, strong and free. The school district has also received funds to allow it to participate in the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (DARE). Training is provided each spring over a 17-week period for 5th grade students. The focus of the program is specific drug and alcohol prevention skills and the training is provided through the Burlington County Sheriff's Department.

The community is very supportive of the school. The Riverton PTA has an extensive schedule of activities that focus on enriching the educational experiences of the children. During the 1998-99 school year, the PTA raised over \$10,000 that was used to provide for field trips, assemblies and the purchase of items beyond the limitations of the school budget. During the review team's visit, the school had just received (through the auspices of the PTA) a new portable sound system for use in the gymnasium/cafeteria/auditorium. The funds raised represent a tremendous effort by the members of this organization. In addition, they publish a monthly newsletter of approximately eight pages. This is a well written and informative document that keeps the whole community apprised of ongoing events. The Friends of Riverton Foundation was formed to also provide support for the school. They have raised and donated funds to provide materials and items outside the regular school budget. In 1998-99, the Foundation donated approximately \$3,000 to the district.

An integral part of the review process is the analysis of a combination of purchasing practices and shared services. Quite frequently the review team would be in a position to recommend that a district join a cooperative or share services in order to save funds. The Riverton School District has already done so in a number of areas. Electricity, natural gas, food services, transportation, insurance, environmental consulting and cooperative purchasing of supplies are identified areas where savings have already been realized and have translated into savings for the taxpayer.

ROOSEVELT BOE

The Roosevelt School District serves as the focal point of the community. Despite having one of the highest tax rates in the State of New Jersey, the community supports the school budget and all activities of the school. It is not uncommon to have almost the entire community present for plays, programs and graduation. There is an exceptional sense of pride exuded by the residents, whether they are original founders or newcomers to the borough. Everyone seems to be of one resolve in their community pride. Small size and limited resources are in many ways restrictive. The upside of this problem is the district's ability and determination to effect necessary change. Limited bureaucracy, a sound work ethic, excellent communications provide a means to this end. The district continually addresses educational issues through sound research and input from the staff and community.

The Roosevelt school officials, to include the board, chief school administrator and, particularly, the school business administrator have made extensive efforts to be cost effective. The purchasing practices of the school district are sound and quality conscious. The taxpayers of the borough benefit greatly by this ongoing effort to save funds.

ROSELLE PARK BOE

Modifications to the student day, and year, are made available by district programs such as WISE, Extended Day, and summer camp which save tax dollars since they provide less expensive local program options. Some of these program modifications are legally mandated, and are provided to Roselle Park students at reduced transportation and operational costs since students do not have to be sent out-of-district for these programs. Some of the district's special education instructional staff split time between two schools.

Assigning teaching staff to more than one building, which is facilitated by the small size of Roselle Park, is an efficient utilization of personnel. This shared staffing demonstrates a desire to provide services in the most cost-effective manner.

Roselle Park High School offers a unique Crisis Intervention Program that operates from the school nurse's office in conjunction with the social studies department. This student support service assists both mental and physical health needs. Volunteer teachers, the school nurse, and students who have completed crisis training as peer counselors provide assistance to students in need. The service enables the high school to help students deal with a wide range of issues through the varying skills of both staff and trained students.

The Crisis Intervention Program is an effective use of local resources while providing a cross section of the school population with the opportunity to help those in need. Roselle Park High School has a well-equipped facility for television broadcast and production. This popular learning lab enables students to hone their talents and learn new skills; both in simulated, as well as real-life broadcast situations. A wide variety of learning experiences are available to students seeking immediate entry into the broadcast industry, as well as for those who intend to continue in formal training after high school. Some students develop skill in the studio that may be used on a purely vocational basis. Students aid in telecasts of board of education meetings and other district activities.

The middle school and Roselle Park High School each has a coin-operated telephone accessible to the public. The district is not billed for these phones; indeed, the telephone company pays the district a commission based on monthly usage. School districts pay a fee to the telephone company for most public phones in school buildings. While the Roselle Park total dollar savings on pay phone charges is not great in amount, the fact that the district negotiated fee-less phones demonstrates a conscientious attitude toward limiting the expenditure of public funds.

RUTHERFORD BOE

SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER (SLMC)

Formal instruction in information skills and the use of information and instructional technologies occurs during SLMC orientation for all freshmen, an introduction to an on-line information search service for all sophomores, and an introduction to the Library of Congress Classification for all seniors. The SLMC promotes reading by providing a continuously updated print collection of fiction and non-fiction titles. A specialist confers with the English department supervisor to maintain copies of titles included on the summer reading list. The specialist changes book displays, recommends titles and provides a computerized book selection program to encourage students to independently discover titles that match their interests. The SLMC offers CD-ROM access to county-wide public library print collections, interlibrary loan and a free delivery service to students and staff. The specialist teaches students to use library resources for information retrieval and independent research by continually stressing a search strategy of five important areas: books, periodicals, newspapers, vertical files and supplemental sources (audiovisual, interlibrary loan, government documents and computer database access). The specialist teaches keyword search techniques with Boolean (Logic Operators) Connectors, manual and computerized/automated indexes to periodicals and newspapers and full-text reference sources, periodical and newspaper back files in microfiche format with reader-printer, and also in on-line information searches. This is a cost-effective method for widening the scope of information available to district students.

CORPORATE DONATIONS

Through a private firm, the district is enrolled in a program which makes it possible for companies to donate millions of dollars worth of new, excess inventory from their warehouses to qualified schools and other non-profit organizations. By doing so, the companies are able to realize federal income tax deductions while at the same time providing products to further the recipient organizations' missions and everyday operations. Donor companies include hundreds of prominent manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors. Common donated products include office and maintenance supplies, arts and craft supplies, paper products, clothing and building materials. Rutherford maintains membership in this program and through it the district is able to select up to 60 of its most needed items from merchandise listings. As the requested items become available, they are shipped to the schools for the cost of shipping and handling. During the past year the district has had a net gain in items received in excess of **\$10,000**.

ATHLETIC DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE FIRMS

As a means for cutting costs, the athletic director for the Rutherford School system has sought out private firms for funding of items needed by the athletic department. As a result of these efforts, one company purchased and donated to the district two scoreboards worth at least \$15,000 as well as storage bins for the donor's products and other items. The director hopes to expand the number of private firm contributions. He is currently seeking outside funding to finance the replacement of the high school gymnasium floor.

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Rutherford's adult education program is designed to provide adults with the opportunity to complete their high school education, continue existing or past educational programs, increase their knowledge and/or improve various skills. The district's adult school budget for the fall of 1996 is consistent with the budgets for the fall of 1995 and the spring of 1996. The program's flexibility is demonstrated by the fact that with an offering of 136 courses, 27 were canceled due to insufficient enrollment. Additionally, two courses in sewing and two in beginning French were combined. Some courses are offered off-campus as well as during the daytime for senior citizens. Total enrollment for course offerings is 1,168 students. All courses are fee based. The adult school estimates income from tuition for the fall semester, 1996 to be approximately \$58,200 with expenses being about \$54,700; thereby realizing an anticipated income for the fall term of about \$3,500. From fall of 1995, spring of 1996 and fall of 1996 (three terms) the program realized a total surplus of more than \$8,700. The district should continue to review the course offerings and expenses while refining the program, as needed, to maintain its success both educationally and economically.

JOINT PARTNERSHIP

The school district has a joint partnership agreement with 23 other districts, for a self-insurance pool for Workers Compensation. The school district has consistently realized an estimated **10%** savings over the fair market rate on its annual premiums. This computes to an estimated annual savings of between **\$10,000 and \$30,000**. Even when calculating the savings in the most conservative terms, the school district has saved at least **\$150,000** over the past years.

OIL TO NATURAL GAS

All school buildings were converted from oil to natural gas approximately five years ago. New burner motors were installed in each of the six schools at a one-time cost of \$27,000. The installation of these burners allowed for the conversion from oil to gas. At the time of the conversion, the district decided to remove the underground oil tanks because of the high cost of insurance. The district solicited estimates for liability insurance, from a consulting engineer as well as from its own insurance carrier. Both clarified that it would cost the district approximately \$5,000 to provide adequate liability coverage for each of the six schools. This insurance was to provide protection in the event of an oil spill, in which case Rutherford Borough School District would be liable for the cleanup. In affect, by removing the underground tanks, the school district saves **\$30,000** in annual liability insurance premiums. The initiative for this change came as a result of an oil tank cleanup in Clifton, which cost the school district in excess of \$200,000. The Rutherford school district converted from purchasing gas from PSE&G to a third party re-seller (Norstar) October 1996. For the five prior years, the district was purchasing its gas directly from PSE&G. Gas is purchased through Norstar by eight to ten other districts headed by Montvale School District. For Rutherford School District, projected annual savings are between 8% and 12%. This computes to an annual estimated hard dollar savings of between **\$8,000 and \$15,000**. .

SALEM CITY BOE

Property Management

The property on which Salem High School is located consists of 91 acres of which 75.3 acres are either undeveloped or utilized as playing fields. To make better use of unused land, the district entered into an agreement with a local soybean farmer who rented 17 acres during the 1996-97 school year. During 1997-98 school year, this amount was reduced to 15 acres. The two acres were reclaimed as part of a new soccer field. The rent is \$45 per acre, which netted the district \$786 in 1996-97 and \$675 in 1997-98. Not only does the district benefit from additional revenue; it also reduces the total acreage to be maintained.

The LGBR team supports this program as cost effective.

Waste Disposal

As a result of the city closing its landfill site, the school district was forced to contract out its waste disposal needs. As usual, hauling costs were charged on a per truck load basis in addition to tipping fees generated at the landfill. This action had a major impact on the district's disposal budget. As a result, the district explored alternative ways to dispose of its waste. After reviewing a number of options the district found the most cost effective option would be to purchase a trash compactor. The function of the compactor is to compress trash thereby reducing its volume. This would reduce the number of truckloads required to dispose of the same volume of trash from three each week to one every three weeks. As a result, the district is saving approximately \$3,000 in hauling fees each year. In addition to reducing its hauling fees, the district also explored options related to tipping fees. As a result, the district signed an agreement with the Salem County Utilities Authority to accept its waste at a rate of \$56.88 per ton, based on a minimum of 142 tons per year. Prior to this agreement the district had been paying \$64 per ton, thereby reducing its tipping fees by \$7.12 per ton. The district disposes of approximately 160 tons of waste yearly which equates to a savings of approximately \$1,140 per year. As a result of the district's efforts, its waste disposal costs have been reduced by approximately \$4,140 each year.

The LGBR team wishes to commend the district for its efforts to reduce its operating expenses.

Facility Utilization

Realizing that the high school facility is underutilized the district is constantly looking for opportunities to make better use of its resources. During the 1997-98 school year, the district rented two unused classrooms within the high school to the Salem County Special Services group. At a rate of \$6,000 per room, the district is generating an additional \$12,000 of revenue each year.

The team supports this program as an example of good facility management and revenue enhancement.

SAYREVILLE BOE

Student Transportation

The Sayreville School District provides an extensive transportation program for its students which combines district operated equipment with private contracted routes, as well as several jointure agreements. In a recent report issued by the New Jersey Commission of Investigation about New Jersey's school transportation industry, a number of improprieties were uncovered. Among the recommendations made by the commission to provide a competitive environment and to minimize cost was for districts to maintain some measure of publicly owned transportation. This is very effectively being done by the Sayreville School District. Sayreville School District's transportation program provides the district with the flexibility of choosing the most cost effective means of transporting each route. It also places the contractors on notice that they are not the only option available. The transportation coordinator determines which routes to contract out and which to assign to district vehicles. The coordinator has the advantage of knowing what the contract price would be and what it would cost to assign the route to a district vehicle. Sayreville also participates in a Roundtable Transportation Group with nearby communities which has saved the district \$35,000 in the 1997-1998 school year.

Student Assistance Counselors

Counseling services to provide student addiction programs are contracted through the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ). The equivalent of 2.5 counselors work with students to teach them appropriate coping and decision-making skills. By contracting for this service instead of hiring staff, the district estimates an annual saving of \$27,200.

Volunteerism

The Sayreville School District advocates the use of volunteers in the operation of its schools whenever it is practical to do so. In the elementary and middle schools, members of the PTA work in the libraries every day that school is in session, under the direction of the librarians, assisting in the library program. As a result of the dedication of these volunteers, the elementary libraries are open five days a week, even though the two elementary librarians split their time between four schools. PTA members are also assigned to the middle school to assist the librarian. In the elementary schools, PTA members volunteer every day to assist the one school secretary by performing a variety of clerical duties. The school district is able to provide necessary support services for students and parents, because of the assistance of these volunteers, and to realize a savings of \$84,000, which is the total cost for an additional clerical employee in each elementary school.

Special Education

The Sayreville School District employs three full-time child study teams to provide evaluation, classification and counseling services for its special education population. In addition to these nine staff members, the district also contracts with certified psychologists, learning disabilities teacher consultants (LDTC) and social workers, who

work on a per case basis, to ensure that the district provides necessary services in a timely fashion. These private contractors work with district team members on new evaluations and re-evaluations, as well as providing counseling services as called for in the Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P.). During the 1996-1997 school year, the school district utilized the services of ten private contractors: three LDTCs, three school psychologists and four social workers. The combination of district child study team members with private contractors provides the district with flexibility in meeting the needs of its students in a cost effective and timely manner and results in a savings to the district of \$15,000.

Food Services

The food services program employs approximately 45 people to prepare and serve lunches in the six schools in the district. In this group there are three full-time employees and the rest are considered part-time. During the last five years, the district has eliminated the full-time employment status of the majority of this staff and converted these positions to part-time. By converting these positions, the district realized a significant savings in health benefits, since part-time employees are not entitled to paid benefits. Assuming, conservatively, that these employees had single coverage, the district has realized a savings of over \$120,000 per year.

Student Council

The Sayreville War Memorial High School student council is a very active organization, whose 60 members take and promote great pride in their school. Thanks to the efforts of the student council, Sayreville has been named an Honor School by the New Jersey Association of Student Councils for the past 36 years. The student council is active in promoting school spirit and pride not only among the student body, but in the community as well. A large focus of their activities is on providing services to the schools and the community. Such service-oriented activities include holiday visits to hospitals, earth week activities to beautify and cleanup the school grounds, presentations to the elementary and middle school students on the dangers of drug abuse, and various charitable fund-raising activities. The student council members also conduct an Activities Program at the middle school to foster an interest in the vast array of extra-curricular activities available to those students when they enter the high school. Sayreville is a culturally diverse and close-knit community. This is mirrored in the student council, which strives to encourage a sense of unity and pride among its student body and within the community. The student council conducts a freshman orientation program to welcome the students and encourage student acceptance and individuality. They participate in Sayreville's Annual Community Unity Day. To encourage interaction and foster better understanding and empathy among its older and younger citizens, Junior/Senior dances are held at the senior citizen center, attended by high school students and senior citizens. School spirit is high in Sayreville, in large part, as a result of the efforts of the student council, and the strong support of their dedicated advisors and administrators.

The district received a Danforth Foundation Grant of \$10,000 from the Race and Class Mini- Grant Program for the local “Using Data to Address Differences” project. The foundation also funded the attendance of the Education Association President and Superintendent to a Superintendent-Union Leaders Roundtable in November, 1999. There have been monthly indistrict communications meetings in an effort to develop a more congenial working relationship between management and union leaderships. The district also has submitted an application for \$24,000 for the Principal’s Initiative, as well as related on-site professional development. The Vagelos Family annually presents an award to a local teacher to honor the memory of Joan Vagelos Currie, who was a long-time teacher in Scotch Plains-Fanwood. The recipient receives a personal \$1,000 stipend, along with another \$1,000 to be used for a school or classroom project. Since 1994, the local Education Enrichment Foundation, which is dedicated to sponsoring enrichment opportunities for students and to encouraging teacher creativity, has sponsored grant awards ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 annually.

Through a competitive grant, the Miles Hodsdon Vernon Foundation funded 24 computers for a prototype classroom of the future in Brunner School. On September 24, 1998, the board adopted a resolution recognizing the third year additional funding of \$26,500 for the prototype classroom at Brunner. The grant included current technologies, networking resources and staff training.

The district has an extensive program of staff professional development, including technology workshops, teacher to teacher modeling activities, partnerships with local universities, and study group funding. In October, 1998, a contract was approved establishing the district as a member of the Fairleigh Dickinson University Professional Development Consortium. Professional development is described in further detail in a separate section of this report.

In January, 2000, the board approved the application and acceptance of funds in the amount of \$25,300 from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation to fund a storytelling project in the district elementary schools for the 2000-01 school year. District officials have developed a budget process, which utilizes study groups for a relatively broad base of involvement. Several public meetings have been scheduled for explanations of the proposed school budget by a number of different staff members. The district has been successful in securing voter approval of school budgets for several consecutive years.

On community workdays parents and community volunteers have worked to help wire the school buildings for local computer networking and Internet access. For example, in June, 1999, the board recognized the AT&T Pioneers for installing the network wiring at McGinn School.

The review team was impressed with the number and quality of positive programs that have resulted from the joint efforts and cooperative relationships between the Scotch Plains and Fanwood Police Departments and the public schools. Four police officers, three from Scotch Plains and one from Fanwood, deliver the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (D.A.R.E.) to more than 375 fifth-grade students. D.A.R.E. consists

of 17 weekly lessons that are presented to 10 and 11 year olds, who are beginning to form their psychological identities and social groups. In addition to focusing on the effects and consequences of drug abuse, D.A.R.E. offers tools to resist peer pressure and say “no” to drug abuse.

The two municipalities absorb the costs of police manpower and training and the school district and the SPF Municipal Alliance Committee (MAC) purchase the books and certificates.

Other activities include an Adopt-A-Cop program whereby individual police officers volunteer to be visible in a particular school by visiting the principal, in hallways, in the lunchroom, and through a bicycle safety program. The Police Athletic League (PAL) provides supervised junior football, cheerleading, wrestling and baseball activities. The police departments also provide traffic studies for the school system and a juvenile officer, who spends a half-day at the high school.

The DELPHI Team with Student Leadership Conference, which was formed in the 1980’s by school officials and a police chief, provides off-site leadership experiences for a cross-section of about 50 teenagers each year. The students are organized into a half dozen teams to build rapport and concentrate on a leadership project. A seven-member committee of public school and police personnel directs the program, which is funded by private sources. The review committee was also impressed with the community-wide attention to the welfare of children and youth. For example, with assistance from many community clubs and groups, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood PTA Council declared the second week in March, 2000 as Think Purple Week to remind students of those who have died or been damaged by drug and alcohol abuse.

Numerous school performances and community activities were held with funding from the Municipal Alliance Committee. The proceeds from the annual Scotch Plains Mayor’s Charity Gala are presented to MAC.

The PTA Council, several individual school PTAs and the Superintendent with personal funds provide scholarships for high school seniors. In addition, several PTAs offer enrichment scholarships for students in their respective schools. A scholarship, recognizing the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Superintendent as a finalist for AASA Superintendent of the Year, was also awarded. School Match of Columbus, Ohio, the nation’s largest independent school selection consulting firm, recently presented the district with the “What Parents Want” Award for 1999. The organization, which helps corporate employee families find schools that match the needs of their children, recognizes only about 14% of the 15,620 public school districts nationwide. Among the criteria used in the selection processes are:

- Competitive academic scores and programs;
- Accredited, recognized excellence by a national foundation or by the U.S Department of Education;
- Competitive teacher salaries;
- Above average instructional expenditures on a national percentile basis;

- Above average in library/media expenditures; and
- Known for small class sizes.

About 400 companies nationwide offer the service as an employee benefit.

MORRIS

The financial challenges associated with providing the best possible education through the implementation of individual education plans for classified students can be quite significant. Part of the challenge facing every district is how to maximize the use of all special education funds. The fact that the individual education plan or “IEP” serves as the cornerstone of each student’s progress and development suggests that generalized solutions and procedures may often be impractical and unsuccessful. In short, the challenge is to provide a customized education within an organizational framework that is normally predicated upon group learning.

The Morris School District operates the Lafayette Learning Center as a focused special education campus. The structure and organization of the Lafayette Learning Center has resulted in an average cost per student that is less than the transportation and tuition costs of other special education programs reviewed by local government budget review teams. The ability to marshall financial resources in a manner that provides an opportunity to take advantage of economies of scale without negating the personalized nature of special education requirements is a best practice deserving to be reviewed and considered by other districts throughout the State of New Jersey.

SOMERVILLE BOE

The Somerville Public School District has been the recipient of numerous grants of equipment and programs at all grade levels. The business partnerships and resulting grants have financed such noteworthy programs as the Central School Science and Technology Center, student mentoring programs, participation at the three-day Pocono Environmental Educational Center, funding for the FIRST national robotics competition, diversity programs for students and staff, Liberty Science Center educational programs, and student recognition awards.

Science Center

Created in 1991, the Central School Science Center offers students the opportunity to learn science in a state-of-the-art laboratory environment. The curriculum is designed to focus on inquiry-based, student-centered, and hands-on experiments. The \$135,000 cash and \$65,000 in services Governors Grant in Mathematics and Science provided in service programs for staff and introduced a new format in multimedia instruction.

Video-Conferencing/Technology Center

A Central Video-Conferencing/Technology Center was established in 1995 by a New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Connections to the Future \$35,000 cash award, which provided the seed money to create a technology program for distance learning. The center connects students with outside resources and other schools throughout the state and country. Technology, computer and higher thinking skills are emphasized and cooperative learning group strategies to research and data collection are utilized.

SSTARS *

Funded in 1996, this cooperative \$57,000 effort with Rutgers University and University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) provided teachers with a curriculum that encourages more positive social decision making on the part of students. This initiative trains faculty, staff, and community personnel with techniques and strategies for assisting students in improving their social decision making skills. This project was recognized by the N. J. Department of Education (DOE) in May, 1998.

**Somerville Safe, Thriving and Responsible Schools*

Environmental Studies

This \$3,500 PSE&G grant allows third graders to study local issues in environmental studies. Working with the Basking Ridge Environmental Center staff, teachers develop topics on pond life, ecology systems, etc. for students to observe and study first hand.

Student Summer Institute

Funded by Johnson and Johnson (J&J), this \$3,500 grant offers Central School students who have a high aptitude in science the opportunity to study for a week in the summer with scientists from area corporations.

Distance Education

Funded in March 1998, this \$8,750 Bell Atlantic grant will connect Central School in the fall with the Totowa School District and a school in Hong Kong via distance education. Students will study governmental issues in the United States and Hong Kong. The primary issue will be the change from a democratic government to a communist format in Hong Kong.

Business Mentors

Piloted with J&J and slated to begin in 1998-99, this program, estimated in value at \$10,000 in services, will pair mentors from J&J and American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T) with selected students in classroom settings. The goal is to match needy students with positive adult role models so students will have a better self-image and improve in school performance.

Science Equipment

Bayer Corporation and Branchburg-based H&R Florasynth recently donated a stereomicroscope, stereophotometer, and a pH bench meter as part of a grant in excess of \$5,000 for use in support of science instruction in the high school. The new highly sensitive equipment offers greater accuracy in all experimental situations. With this new

equipment, the high school can now offer college level laboratory environments for Advanced Placement (AP) chemistry and biology courses. The program is a Bayer initiative supporting hands-on, inquiry based science education and science literacy.

Educational Foundation

Utilizing a \$10,000 grant from Ethicon, the district has a newly formed Educational Foundation, which will seek to enhance the development of innovative educational programs and projects.

School Traffic Safety

Since Somerville does not have district busing, there is a significant auto traffic problem at Van Derveer School each morning and afternoon as K-2 children are dropped off and picked up by parents, who often carpool. The school currently has one combination entrance/exit, a circular driveway and a congested traffic pattern. The Superintendent recently wrote to the county freeholders requesting assistance in building a second parking lot and a safer driveway exit at Van Derveer School. County officials agreed to provide engineering services valued at \$8,000 for the project. The services will provide schematics, permits, drainage, configurations and articulation with the N. J. Department of Transportation. The Superintendent also managed to secure a state public safety grant for \$300,000 to construct the Van Derveer parking lot, U-shaped one-way driveway, and separate exit.

Somerville school officials, particularly the Superintendent and the Central School Principal, are commended for the extensive efforts that have been made to secure these cost-effective programs for the benefit of both Somerville taxpayers and local children and youth.

TOMS RIVER REGIONAL BOE

Special Education Cost Reductions

The Toms River Regional School District has taken a variety of steps to reduce costs, foremost being the establishment of in-district programs that have permitted children to return and benefit from services within the system which are generally less costly than out-of-district placements. The district has concentrated its efforts on bringing back into the school district those special education students who previously were sent to private institutions due to their unique educational needs. Today, each high school in Toms River has its own program for emotionally disturbed students, and the district operates a central high school program for the emotionally disturbed students in Building J at Toms River High School South.

Staff Reduction

Over the past six years the district has eliminated approximately 300 non-instructional positions. This has meant a \$1,600,000 payroll reduction. A number of these positions have been eliminated from the district central office.

Inter-Agency Cooperation

The Township of Dover leases a downtown office building to the district for one dollar per year. This is a good example of cooperation between public entities that saves tax dollars while providing useful office space.

Sidewalk Program

In cooperation with local municipalities, the district has constructed sidewalks in an effort to provide safe walkways to school for children who live within the state's non-aid bus limits. According to district officials, this program has increased the number of potential student walkers from 500 at its inception 20 years ago, to almost 4,000 today.

Project EXCEL

Project EXCEL provides enrichment and re-enforcement help for all interested students before the start of the regular school day. EXCEL avoids pulling students out of classroom instruction during the school day, which is often a problem for both students and teachers.

Technology Training

The Toms River Regional School District has established an excellent technology training facility in its administrative offices. This \$330,000 center was established and equipped through donations from area and national businesses through the efforts of the superintendent.

Additional Funding Sources/Benefactors

The superintendent, administration, and the board of education have taken a number of steps to seek funding sources, attract community benefactors, and promote mutually beneficial ventures. As a result of these efforts, the technology-training program, the Café @ 1144 Hooper Avenue, and several other major undertakings have been established to benefit the children of the Toms River Regional School District.

Athletics

The district has historically benefited from the benevolence of the board of directors of the Toms River Country Club. Members of the Toms River High School South co-ed golf team are permitted use of the Toms River Country Club golf course at no charge to the students or the district. Use of the course is provided to the team for both practice and interscholastic tournament play. For approximately 25 years, each new golf season has marked the continuation of the club's long-standing commitment to local youth.

Health Insurance

The district has hired a separate prescription carrier from their health care company in order to obtain better information on escalating health care costs. The district's pharmacy plan permits the patient to pay for the specific brand of medication that the patient may desire but at a discount price.

1. *Bilingual Education* - The district has seen a burgeoning bilingual education problem and has made an effective use of the older students in providing bilingual translation for younger students. This has provided an effective means of assuring that the younger students received their day-to-day instructions. The teachers and the review team noted that the older students were able to effectively translate the teachers requirements due to their bilingual proficiency and the fact that they were still students themselves. This process helps to ensure that newer bilingual students received immediate direction and clear and concise interpretation for their educational needs. It also serves to reinforce for the older students the need for bilingual education and enhanced their ability to translate and communicate in both languages. 2. *Disciplinary Policies* - The district has a fully visible and effective discipline policy. The review team observed a high degree of discipline within the school buildings and the safe and orderly movement of children around the campus and to their related transportation facilities. The disciplinary policies were clearly posted for each and every student to read in the classroom and in the hallways, and constantly referred to by the staff, teachers and the administration. This provides a positive method of handling and avoiding discipline problems.

WEST MILFORD BOE

Cooperative Purchasing

The review team was favorably impressed with the cooperative purchasing practices of the school district for supplies, insurance and fuel. Through a well-planned and efficiently executed system directed by the business administrator, purchase orders per bids were approved for Educational Data Services, Inc. (Essex, Hudson, Passaic Cooperative Bidding) for \$270,000 in general supplies, instructional supplies and building services supplies. Based upon review team experience in other districts, the estimated net savings are about \$60,000 per year.

Health Benefits Incentive Program

The district health insurance incentive program encourages employees with “double” coverage through a spouse to voluntarily forego medical benefits for district net savings of about \$125,000 in 1999-00. The program established last year has exceeded initial projections as the number of participants has climbed to 28. The business office sponsors a benefits fair during the October staff development day. In addition to district service providers, the payroll department provides information on the program to further increase participation. The business administrator estimates projected savings for the 2000-01 school year to be \$145,000.

Electric Deregulation

The district has capitalized on deregulation of natural gas and electricity by cooperatively purchasing these commodities from third party suppliers. The savings for gas have been as high as \$36,000 annually. The district has also joined Alliance for Competitive Energy Services (ACES), a statewide electricity purchase cooperative, and has received competitive rates for district buildings in the GPU area. This is a new program and savings have not yet been calculated.

Energy Conservation Projects

Three years ago the district undertook a lighting retrofit project, which paid for itself and saved the district more than \$100,000 per year in energy costs. Currently, the district is working with Noresco on a heating project. Noresco has analyzed the district's energy consumption and determined that there are energy savings available to fund some equipment purchases. They have focused on the High School, Macopin, Marshall Hill, and Maple Road Schools. The payback will be over nine years and is projected to yield an additional \$64,800 in energy savings over the lease period.

Underground Storage Tank (UST) Loan

As per federal regulations, the district replaced several UST's. The district applied for and, after two years of work, received an interest free loan of \$210,147 from the state Economic Development Authority.

Technology Grants

The technology supervisor completed and submitted the next round of applications for an E-rate grant for the 1999-00 school year. The school and libraries division has approved two of the applications for a total of \$37,600. These funds partially will offset costs of the technology implementations. Technology improvements have been on the "cutting edge" particularly in terms of construction of the "state-of-the-art" technology infrastructure for the district. The superintendent and the technology supervisor have worked to qualify for a \$34,500 grant to fund a significant portion of the cost of installing an Interactive TV room. ITV provides opportunities to increase course offerings through distance learning. Districts can share resources, i.e., staff and students, and simultaneously offer courses that otherwise would be economically infeasible. This will allow courses to run with small enrollments per school whereby several districts collectively form an entire class of 16 to 24 students.

PTA Organizations

The PTA/PTO organizations at the elementary schools have been a major source of financial and volunteer support within the school district. Each of the PTA/PTO's has contributed tens of thousands of dollars each year for a variety of projects, such as playground equipment, stage curtains, etc. The PTA/PTO's through fund raising have also paid for enrichment programs for students during the school day and evening educational experiences for parents. In recent years, the development of parent/student educational activity nights, such as the science and mathematics night, has been a very worthwhile practice. Also, at the secondary school level, booster clubs have supported and enhanced the athletic and music programs by volunteering time and raising money.

Community Organizations

A number of community organizations have been quite supportive of the public schools. The educational foundation program provided mini-grants to the West Milford faculty. Cooperation with the PAL programs and Little League has been most productive. The youth sports programs have benefited from the school district's gym facilities and fields. In turn, the district has been the beneficiary of thousands of dollars of free labor and

capital improvements. Projects have included ball field lighting, dugouts, fencing, bleachers and rental money to cover operation costs in some facilities. Finally, senior citizen volunteer programs have been exceptional, especially the Seniors Educationally Enhancing Kids (SEEK) program. The district has had great success with the senior chorus and with the policy of encouraging seniors to use school facilities.

Jointure Transportation

The West Milford School District has worked with county agencies and other districts to coordinate jointures for both summer and regular year transportation. Some summer runs for an extended school year require aides and are, therefore, expensive. West Milford School District, which is located somewhat remotely, has numerous joint agreements with individual school districts, including Bloomingdale, Kinnelon, Pequannock, Pompton Lakes, Ringwood, Wanaque, Ramapo/Indian Hills, Lakeland Regional, Vernon, etc., particularly for the transportation of special education students. Joining with other districts for transportation has saved West Milford more than \$80,000 during the past year.

Extraordinary Aid

West Milford has successfully applied for state reimbursement for extraordinary expenses for students with special education needs. Through the joint efforts of the special services and business offices, the district has been able to qualify for revenues in each of the past two years for program costs exceeding \$40,000 for a number of their students with disabilities. By receiving more than \$150,000, or 95% of the funds requested in 1999-00, the district is able to support its special education programs and students more effectively and to reduce the impact of such expenses on regular education programs.

Special Education Medicaid Initiative

The district has maintained a high level of student registration in the Medicaid program, thus enabling it to receive payments for allowable services provided through special education. Including an introduction to the Medicaid application as part of the child study team evaluation process helps assure that parents are advised of their children's potential eligibility. As a result, 33 of the 37 estimated eligible district students are enrolled in this program.

WEST ORANGE BOE

The West Orange Public Schools have engaged in a variety of activities and initiatives that are worthy of both recognition and replication. The West Orange Scholarship Fund was initiated early in the twentieth century and has grown with constant dedicated community support. There are 17 separate scholarship accounts within the general fund. Interest from the principal enabled 39 scholarships to be awarded in June, 1998. Individuals or groups may donate funds for a one-year grant. Two one-time scholarships were awarded in 1998.

The district has generated two school-community partnerships in the recent past. These projects have brought guest lecturers, career education information, summer employment, and after graduation, employment opportunities to students. The cooperating community organizations are Organon, Inc. and the Kessler Rehabilitation Institute. The district estimates that it saves approximately \$50,000 in tuition reimbursement by using its own staff as instructors for many in-service training courses and awarding salary credit for the district-run courses. All teachers new to the district are required to attend a pre-employment workshop that focuses on teaching in a culturally diverse classroom, an overview of district curriculum, and classroom management techniques. This is a creative and commendable approach to new staff orientation.

The West Orange Public Schools offer an enrichment summer school program. The fees from participating students pay for program expenses. This is a way to provide a good service to district students at no cost to the taxpayers. The district's negotiated agreement with its teachers' association permits a sixth class to be assigned to volunteer secondary school teachers as a trade-off for elimination of building supervisory assignments. Recently, 36 teachers were so assigned for a reduction of the cost of the equivalent of 7.2 teachers.

The district has a high quality auditorium that is rented to a variety of groups. The rental funds benefit the district while the performing groups get excellent facilities. The high school's Student Learning Alternative Experience is a for-credit program that allows advanced language students to help with world language programs in the elementary schools.

WILLINGBORO BOE

I. DISTRICT TESTING INSTITUTE

The superintendent has instituted an innovative program which is designed to improve test scores for the students in the Willingboro Public Schools. The program, Willingboro District Testing Institute, consists of the following:

a. District Wide Telephone Tutorial Message Service

This is designed to improve communication on homework and provides a toll free number which allows the student or parent to talk to a certified teacher concerning homework assignments. It is offered 24 hours a day, seven days a week and it is an innovative idea permitting students to get immediate professional help.

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b. Teleconference and Video Phone Sub-Tutoring

This program permits the student to electronically attend a HSPT or SAT prep course prior to the test date, and permits the student to understand the aspects of the testing prior to the actual test itself. This has proven to be a successful methodology for improving Standardized test scores.

c. Drexell University Cooperative Program

This highly innovative and very successful program was established in partnership with Drexell University and selected corporations in and around the Willingboro area to provide tutorial mathematics programs for 6th grade students. Six students from each of the seven elementary schools are selected via lottery to visit the Drexell campus for math tutoring from October to May. Recognizing the downturn in mathematics scores nationwide, this program provides excellent support to the teaching program.

d. Community Volunteer Program

This program recruits retired people and staff members to volunteer to work with students. It provides hands-on training which complements the normal classroom time.

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e. HSBT/Early Warning Test Before School After School Preparation Program –

This is a volunteer program by teachers which provides for additional help in preparing for these tests. The most commendable point is that all the activities are educationally driven, pupil centered and at no cost to the Board of Education or community as a whole. This is a highly innovative program and the district should be commended for it.

II. VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

The district provides for the installation of a video camera in school buses where the bus drivers have identified behavior problems. This allows the district to visually demonstrate to parents the children that have misbehaved while on school transportation. This highly successful system has improved safety and security on school buses.

WOODBIDGE BOE

Communicating and Sharing

In Woodbridge, there is an attitude of sharing and cooperation between township and school district officials. The township provides garbage pickup without charge to the school district. The Woodbridge Township Parks and Recreation Department frequently uses the public school buildings and fields. In turn, the township makes its 50 township parks available for scheduling the school district's extracurricular/athletic activities. Township officials surveyed student interests in planning the new community center. The new Colonia Middle School field house was constructed through mutual cooperation and contributions from the Colonia Girls' Softball League, the school district and the township. Township officials have also been active in the public school character education program.

Interlocal Agreements

The school district has several interlocal agreements with the township. As part of the Woodbridge Tech 2000 Project, the township and the school district are implementing a shared computer/network resources program with each of the 24 public schools and four school office buildings. Under this agreement, the township provides the school district with one project manager and two assistant managers for the purpose of managing the

shared computer resources program. The district has agreed to pay \$50 per hour for the project manager and \$30 per hour for each of the assistant project managers. The Tech 2000 project is described in the Technology section of this report. Implementation of phase one of Tech 2000 was funded by contributions of \$1.5 million by the school district, \$1 million by Woodbridge Township and nearly \$1 million by a private firm. A significant amount of free equipment was obtained from the Bell Atlantic Access New Jersey Program. In addition, the school district received \$389,000 in E-rate funding and about \$50,000 in other contributions and grants. In August, 1999, a lease agreement was signed with Woodbridge Township for the use of the vacant Port Reading Library. District officials relocated the School #9 media center to the adjacent township library/media building, which allowed the district to convert the school media center to a classroom to house a special education autistic class. By locating the autistic class within the district, the district achieved significant annual savings in out-of-district tuition and transportation costs. The renovations to the Port Reading Library cost the district \$95,000 from surplus funds and all renovations were performed by district personnel.

REDI and REAP

As indicated in the shared services section of this report, the Woodbridge Township School District has been actively involved in cooperative planning with other nearby governmental agencies. For example, district officials approved a joint application with Woodbridge Township for a Regional Efficiency Development Incentive (REDI) grant for \$95,639 to perform a feasibility study in shared voice telecommunications systems. The board also approved a joint REDI application with Woodbridge Township, all nine Woodbridge Fire Districts, all six Woodbridge Rescue Squads, the City of Perth Amboy and the Amboy Board of Education for \$90,000 to conduct a feasibility study in shared regional communications systems.

Business Contributions

District officials have been active in soliciting contributions from private businesses. There was a \$75,000 donation from a construction contractor to purchase bleachers for Woodbridge High School. Proceeds from the vending machine contract have been used to purchase two scoreboards for the baseball fields at JFK and Woodbridge high school baseball fields. The public schools have benefited from donations of laptop computers and desks/chairs from private companies. Several private firms made donations or offered discounts toward the Tech 2000 infrastructure installations.

Investment Earnings

The district has done an outstanding job of maximizing investment income. The district's banking design is well organized and competitively priced. Interest rates throughout 1999-00 ranged from 4.56% to 5.88% and compared favorably with the standards used by the review team. In addition to the bank accounts, which were used for daily operations, the district invested excess funds, when available, in higher yielding investment instruments. Fund balances were tracked daily and outstanding investments and interest paid were reported at month-end. Interest paid on the district's higher yielding investments was approximately \$600,000. This represented a net gain of

approximately 0.3%, or \$35,000, for the year over what the district would have earned had these funds remained in the regular bank accounts.

Learning Differences

Menlo Park School has obtained a number of grants that benefit the student body. An initial grant in the amount of \$10,000 and a follow-up grant for \$25,000, shared with eight other New Jersey schools, have been used for staff training and implementation of a new comprehensive development and service program. The program offers elementary, middle and high school educators new methods for recognizing, understanding and managing students with differences in learning.

After-School Instruction

The Fords Middle School conducts an after-school program to prepare at-risk students for annual standardized tests. The program is staffed by teacher volunteers who donate one hour of instruction twice a week, for a period of two months prior to testing, in the areas of math and reading, at no cost to the participants. Seventy-five percent of the 1999-00 student participants improved their standardized test scores, and a number placed out of remedial services.

Family Support

Elementary school programs to improve student self-esteem include a district-wide initiative in working with parents/guardians to provide support in the home for students to develop study/testing skills. The series of evening sessions to help parents support the academic programs includes family writing, mathematics and science presentations.

Bilingual/English-as-a-Second Language (ESL)

The district provides impressive bilingual and ESL programs to meet the needs of students who

enroll with limited abilities to communicate in English. The decision to establish magnet schools

at each level for bilingual and ESL allows the district to assign staff in an efficient manner.

Responsiveness to changes in the student population has been demonstrated through the development of programs to address new linguistic groups moving into the district.

Job Sharing

The Woodbridge Township Teachers Association agreement provides teachers assigned to positions in kindergarten, middle school, high school and special areas the opportunity to engage in job sharing with the permission of the board. This provision, which first appeared in the 2000- 03 contract, allows two teachers to perform separate parts of one full-time teaching assignment. The language of the agreement specifies that the cost to the district for salary and benefits for the two employees covered by a job sharing agreement shall be no greater than the cost to the board for employing one employee in the position. Although no positions were being shared at the time of this review, this innovative clause should serve the district and its employees well in the years to come. As worded, it provides flexibility to teachers who prefer something less than full-time employment. At the same time, it gives the district additional options in employment and

scheduling, and may help decrease “travel time” expenditures incurred by the board when individual teachers are assigned to multiple schools.

Service-Learning

The Iselin Middle School was recognized on May 30, 2001 as one of ten New Jersey schools selected by the Corporation for National Service as a National Service-Learning Leader School for 2001. New Jersey continues to lead the nation in the number of schools honored for their special commitment to inclusion of community service activities into their curricula.

Parent/Teacher Organization

During the visitations to the 24 schools, the review team was impressed with the degree of involvement by the school PTOs in school support and enrichment activities. The PTOs have been active and involved with many fund-raising projects, which have financed a variety of school improvements such as assembly programs, reading rugs, sound systems, wireless microphone, new stage curtains, portable public address system, grounds landscaping and new front signs. The PTOs also have organized parent/community volunteers to work within the school setting, particularly in the media centers or to chaperone school dances. PTOs have initiated a series of family-oriented evening activities, such as roller-skating, movie night, and a hotline with staff/volunteers to assist students who encounter problems with homework. Through the PATS Forum, parents and teachers work together to promote academic enrichment by bringing in community people, former students and other individuals to address the students and answer questions. Teachers in the district have received a number of financial grants from Ecolab, the local education foundation and PTOs. Principals periodically publish brief newsletters informing parents about student activities and upcoming events.